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THE SOUL AND BODY OF AN ARMY



# THE SOUL AND BODY OF AN ARMY

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"A Staff-Officer's Scrap Book,"  
"Gallipoli Diary," etc.

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## 2. THE SOUL AND BODY OF AN ARMY

Some day the historian may endeavour to reconstruct our dead Empire (as the antediluvian may be built again from one bone) by following Gibbon's example and cogitating upon that little word "Army." Did those master-builders of empire, the British, he may ask, look to skill or work, numbers or quality, free service or forced service, when they fashioned their imperial instrument, the military forces of the Crown? Were they so far-sighted that their famous legionaries were always just half a lap in advance of the times? What was actually the yolk whose eggshell was formed by those four primitive signs A R M Y?

Heaven knows into what patterns our slant-eyed historian that is to be will weave his fancies over our graves, but the truth is that before '14 the people of these islands knew nothing about their Army. They never got a chance. Their school syllabus was as silent upon the subject of soldiering as if some indelicate secret rendered an Army unfit for children's ears. The censorship laid upon experts was, and remains, more severe than in any other Army in the world; stricter than even in the Japanese Army. There could hardly be a better proof of lack of interest. The freest people and Press in the world are the most hoodwinked by military regulations for secrecy made in their own War Office! If the public had been keen about their Army they would never for a moment have stood orders framed to shield the War Office from independent criticism. In those half-dozen years before the war, at any rate, much greater freedom of discussion existed in the stiffly-disciplined German

the Bavarian Press sarcastically remarked on the occasion of the issue of our amended muzzling regulations in 1908, "the British public are evidently so well educated in military matters that they do not mind gagging their instructors."

In the nineteenth century the people were not all-powerful, so they were allowed to hear and see. By the beginning of the present century, however, it was clear that Demos was out to rule in fact as well as in name. He could only be dodged by the politicians as the man with the handkerchief over his eyes is dodged during the game of blind man's buff. So it came about that anti-Press, anti-publicity, Official Secrets Acts have kept step with loud professions of belief in open diplomacy and the wisdom of the sovereign people. Contrast the regulations which were thought good enough when the people had not much power, with the regulations framed against the eyes and ears of the people, i.e. their Press, when their will was apparently law. In a word—our regulations governing the publication by soldiers of their views on military matters (Appendices I and II) are veritable *Lettres de Cachet*, consigning the intellects of our Democracy to the Bastille of ignorance.

Yet, surely, if the watchdogs already began to wear muzzles in those days before the war, there was still the common sense of the nation? They saw their Army daily. They were in personal touch with the officers or the rank and file, each in his own grade. In the great towns of the Midlands and of the North, towns which supplied the Army with its recruits, the drab streams of humanity

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night would be brightened here and there by a bit of "England's bloody red" lending colour to the life of a mill-girl; by the band of the regiment, the glitter of the bayonets; by the Army making itself at home.

What an idea! Our famous regiments had nothing to do with the people, and so, in the loneliest tracts in the kingdom, at the Curragh of Kildare and on Salisbury Plain, hideous barracks were built at vast expense to make the lives of the men dull as ditch-water, and to encourage enlistment by keeping the people at arm's length from their Army until they really half forgot that it existed.

These would be some of the facts which a yellow historian might strike upon when he was preparing for his digest of the pre-war British and their method of maintaining a vaster system of voluntary service than that of Imperial Rome. At first there would seem to be *no* method, nothing but madness; but, as he went on, he might discover a little bit of statecraft half hid under this semblance of insanity.

The British Empire has been raised to its present dizzy height by the profound imaginings of a mere handful of great men. Consider the slowly-acquired scientifically-dispersed chain of fortresses binding Hong-Kong to London and holding back Asia from the Antipodes. Give Napoleon or Von Moltke a clean map of the world, a free hand, and a year to think matters over, and they could not improve upon what a lot of rather heavy Britishers have appeared to do by chance.

Cardwell was one of the great men; or, if not, at least he was greatly advised. Consider that

guarantees the sovereign sheep against their own sheepishness ; which silences their baas and bleats whenever and wherever they endeavour to increase the pennies in their purses (and thereby the temptations to robbers) at the expense of the numbers of their watchdogs. When Cardwell came in he found a system of overseas armies of occupation built on the classic model of the old Roman frontier garrisons except that our regiments had not been, since the Indian Mutiny, permanently localised like the Legions. The weakest point of the Roman model was that if one of the frontiers was hard pressed it could only be reinforced by withdrawing troops from another point on the circumference. Cardwell determined to provide a central, home-service reserve, and he did it this way : the foreign service units were duplicated at home, and these home battalions could be quite truthfully described by Cardwell to his pacifist, liberal colleagues and constituents, as being nothing more formidable or militaristic than the necessary recruits who were being trained to keep the overseas garrisons up to strength. But they were so well trained (not in depôts, as formerly, but in skeleton battalions) that when, on mobilisation being ordered, their cadres were filled up by the reservists, these modest units became Contemptibles—best soldiers in the world bar none. To get the reservists' short service had to be brought in, and to get the duplication of units battalions had to be linked, and the old, famous numbers had to be scrapped. The present generation could never have been brought to imagine the

the Military Clubs and the regimental officers, had they not themselves witnessed an even greater stroke of military policy than Cardwell's, followed by an even fiercer outburst of wrath. If Cardwell was the Castor of our military firmament, Haldane was its Pollux. How splendidly did he shine out during those dark nights when we might all of us "sleep in our beds"—and a long last sleep it would have been had Haldane really believed in soporifics.

Cardwell had left the Army in the following state :

(1) Bare minimum garrisons for India and the overseas territories and fortresses ;

(2) Reserves for these foreign service troops which, by his clever organising skill, were represented to the taxpayer as being mere depôts, whereas they were really duplicate training battalions capable of quickly taking the field as fighting units ;

(3) A disorganised mass of militia, yeomanry and volunteers, supposed to be adjuncts to the martello towers of the South Coast, as defenders of our hearths and homes.

Came Haldane the Organiser, and cut, pruned, shuffled, grafted, drafted until he had grouped (2) into an Expeditionary Force of six Divisions whilst making (3) partly into a special reserve for that Expeditionary Force and partly into fourteen fighting divisions, complete with engineers, artillery, cavalry, transport, supply and medical services. When I look back on this period and think of the jungle filled with hissing adders which Haldane broke up into a symmetrical and delectable garden,

and even to lend at times a hand. The war was won when Haldane stepped into the War Office: most miserably must we have lost it had he failed us. To say this is common justice—no more. We abound in Ministers who can spend more and produce less: Haldane spent less and less, yet quadrupled the value of the outfit! Be it carefully borne in mind, these skeleton battalions and batteries of recruits which formed Haldane's skeleton divisions were so modestly tucked away into holes and corners of the country that it was impossible for the average citizen to work up much interest in their existence or to imagine that they could possibly play a part amidst the enormous conscript Armies of the Continent. Democracy is inclined by nature to believe in quantity rather than quality; before the war they were indeed provokingly humble-minded about the fighting value of their own troops, which were probably—I say *probably*—the best the world has ever seen. The nation forgot them, clean forgot them, and what martial enthusiasm the people possessed, and what spare cash also, was preserved in loving and undisputed allegiance to the spear-head of their attack and their last ditch's defence—the navy; to the bluejackets who were, in the public eye, propagating good opinions as well as young ideas in every port in the Empire.

We see, then, that it was not so easy for the citizen to get into touch with his Army, and we see, further, it was as well he did not do so, as it might have weaned him prematurely from his mother, the Navy. Since then, it may be said, all has



about its Army cannot be worth knowing! If that is being said—and I have heard something like it—nothing could be more wide of the mark. Quite true, after four and a half years of war, our people recognize differences between an Army Corps and the Army Service Corps. The girls have worn khaki and served overseas; they can spot a V.C.—likewise an O.B.E. But those who have listened to conversations innumerable may agree perhaps with me that as soon as ex-Service men and women get outside their own little circles they are lost: they have seen nothing, heard nothing, know nothing of the working of the enormous piece of machinery of which they had formed part. They think they know everything because they have felt certain cogs catch and play upon other cogs; the relations of a Government to its Army they really realise no more than a fly on a coach wheel realises the relations between the driver and his horse. The strongest contrast to this conceited ignorance is found in the humble pose taken towards the Navy. Politicians, whether of the House of Commons or house of bitters variety, though they may gaily start off armies to march without transport into the Balkans, would think twice or three times before they took liberties with an ironclad. As to women, their experiences on steamers bound for Margate incline them to extreme reticence on saltwater topics. So the Scapa Flow mists hang impenetrable around our brave sailors and, in some ways, the Senior Service scores. The Admiralty is the only surviving department of Government which still dares tell a newspaper combine to go to h—

the same sentence with a highly respected, indeed almost sacred, body—and what's more, I won't. The War Office has to surrender at discretion, for the Army has become a plaything to P.M.'s, M.P.'s and P.O., by which I mean Public Opinion. Soldiering seems familiar: sailing is an occult science. But the truth is rarely what it seems. Just as civilians are apt to know less about the Army than they think they do, so they probably know more about the Navy than they think they do, for the simple reason that the Navy is much more simple than the Army. Any Admiralty clerk can order so many weeks' supply of munitions, petrol, food, drink, to be shoved on board a battleship, and there she is ready, in the material sense, for anything! No line of communications, no transport question, no worry about water, weather, or bread and butter. The ship carries everything in her belly, including most of the anxieties and conundrums which break the heart of a longshore fighter.

Quite plainly, I do not think the average voter of Great Britain has grasped the significance of an Army, and I feel that the *half knowledge* he has gathered from his own experiences during the war may tend to become more dangerous than the pre-war *no knowledge*, which still holds good as regards the Navy. Otherwise, it would be impossible that in Midsummer, 1921, our organisation should remain essentially what it was in Midsummer, 1914, although meanwhile the factors to be encountered by that organisation no longer exist. There is no balance of power in Europe; there is no question

created the Expeditionary Force, the special reserve battalions and the fourteen Territorial Divisions. Weapons, too, are on the move, and yet we are resting on our oars; seem to think that because there are difficulties in the way, because Ireland, Mesopotamia and Germany have put too great a strain on our troops to enable us to work experimental Brigades, that, therefore, there is nothing to be done. There is everything to be done, yet the only original step we have taken is to stick a compulsory service clause into the Territorial agreement—like a sting in the business end of a scorpion.

The worst of it is that, under existing regulations, no serving soldier can tell his fellow-countrymen anything about an Army which is not, (1) quite commonplace; (2) an expression of the views of the Authorities of the moment. If he is very senior, and feels he has friends at Court, he may, of course, break the rules and take the risk: but his example is very bad for discipline. If, again, he is a brilliant junior, he may break the rules by stealth and put forth his views anonymously; but our best officers would not break the rules by stealth, and the residue who might do so would find that a nameless article would pan out like a brushless fox—not worth following. I began this paragraph by saying "the worst of it is," but there is a worser. The "Authorities of the moment" are the P.M., the S. of S. for War, and the C.I.G.S., of whom the last, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, is the actual, vigilant, responsible custodian of the gates that lead from the Army to the public. Is it not putting almost too great a strain upon a great and overworked man to ask him to decide yes or no about a book

which might select him to be the paladin of its romance? Suppose, further, it should so have chanced that, in the very same volume, several of his rivals and enemies have been severely trounced,—his better nature—his chivalry—must rise up in arms against the idea of passing so invidious a work—and yet—the book might be well worth publishing! I have said there was a worser, but worser may be followed by “and worser.” How if an Artful Dodger had determined at all costs to slip through the Customs with his State monopoly contraband, and had prepared to that very end a honey cake for Cerberus at the gate—prepared it so artfully that poor Cerberus never got farther than the honey, but, overcome by a mellifluous drowse, let all the rest of the gall and vinegar go past? This would be bad—bad for Cerberus, bad in the long run for the regulation dodger, bad, most of all, for the public.

These regulations were intended to prevent the public from hearing anything but the War Office side of the story. Sweep away the whole of these prussic acid gags; permit officers to use their own judgment and to shoulder a reasonable responsibility like other grown-up human beings; let them write to the Press, or publish books, provided they put their names to them. If they show independence of mind in approaching a military question their brother officers will make them suffer, for that is the way of the herd, and there's no getting away from it. But Authority must indeed be in a bad way if it cannot stand the racket of a difference of opinion with a subaltern. If, on the other hand, the officer reveals what isn't his'n (i.e. State secrets)

he goes to prison. If he permits himself to be cheeky or offensive, and says things which are subversive of discipline, he can be tried by court martial. I submit that here is the only way for a free democratic nation to make a clean wipe out of a bad blot which has fallen on our military regulations quite lately from the pen of Autocracy. For the times are anxious; the electors ought to be taught; they should be told at least nine-tenths of the contents of drawers marked "secret" and guarded by bureaucrats whose mothers don't trust them yet with latchkeys.

What has just been written sounds like a foreword to some sensational disclosures or the opening up of wildly subversive doctrines. Nothing of the sort. I am very sorry. This book is only an effort to convey my experiences of the "points" of a dark horse to his owners—the public. Trainers and jockeys dislike a "knowing" owner; the British Government and its bureaucrats, whether they wear spurs or stove-pipe hats, dislike a "knowing" B.P., and that is why these Press and Publicity Acts have been framed. Being late converts to the Continental closure systems, as usual, we have gone farther than our originals, the Prussians. In Prussia every word written here might have been published as a matter of course by any young officer on full pay. Here, in pre-war England, he could not have got it past the General Staff—not if he had dedicated the work to Lord French himself—because of its reflections (blasphemies they would have been considered) on Cavalry. To-day, post-war, there would have been an equal chance—no chance—of a permit to publish because of the

reflections (blasphemies they are called) about Compulsory Service. Now at last I am free and; D.V., I am going to write freely, were it only because an insider of fifty years' standing who has reached the outsider stage without leaving his senses behind him owes that last duty to the State. Did I know of any treatise on the "being" of an Army, I could take cover from the gadfly that stings sluggards into effort. But I do not. There are thousands of books on war, on strategy, on tactics, on battles:—there are drill-books, field-service regulations, and King's regulations, but these are kites of another colour.

Perhaps the image I hold in the camera of my skull cannot be developed in the open? Perhaps it has become too complicated? A versailed Europe is one vast camp. Babylon, Assyria, Greece and Rome enjoyed no like spectacle. Even the men of the Middle Ages who were indentured under the feudal system to turn themselves into Armies on the nod would be astonished could they see a British Army of the Rhine, a French Army of Silesia, a Belgian Army, an Italian Army, a Greek Army, Poland an Army, Russia an Army, and, as if this were not enough, an Army of Africans "larning" the Germans to make bricks.

Why this beautiful peace treaty should need so many Armies and warships to keep it going is not my present concern. But the Armies themselves are a study, although, just now, they are only doing police work for war profiteers. I am sure that if a philosopher wants to study his own or any other nation his best way is to go on foreign service with its Army. I do know this, because I am able to

see the pitfalls into which ladies and gentlemen have fallen when they have attempted to distil the genuine Japanese spirit from a jumble of books, geishas, elder statesmen, merchants, peasants, or the cosmopolitan society of Tokio. So the people of the U.S.A. still keep buying *A Staff-Officer's Scrap-Book* after fifteen years, because their instinct (aroused by danger) enables them to understand that live Japs walk through its pages: and why live? Because they are microcosms of an Army in the field, and an Army is always super-national.

The Armies thus differ more typically than their nation, but where an Army is based upon voluntary service it may be conceded that it represents that part of the nation which has responded to a high appeal, and in so responding has left the residue below par. Our British Army was the pick of the nation (speaking broadly), and the balance (still speaking broadly) consisted of its leavings. The whole of the young virility of town and country-side flows into the ranks, and so, in war, an Army becomes *dominant* to the civilian crowd left at home, who are, in Mendelian phrase, *recessive*. The impact of the opinion of a victoriously returning Army upon the people who had remained behind should produce the same result as the impact of a black bull upon a red heifer: i.e. the black or *dominant* colour should appear in the calf, or post-war policy, although that calf may carry in it the factors, the germs, the potentialities, of reasserting in time to come a *recessive* character or colour.

This is the natural course of events, but Mr. Lloyd George has thwarted Nature, and now she, outraged, is taking her revenge. With us the *dominant*

opinion of the Army has never been allowed its impact upon the *recessive* stay-at-homes. The calf of my fable, therefore, the post-war policy, has been a miserable little beast.

Through fear of the Army, a fear born of ignorance, the more generous, manly side of our race has been wiped off the political slate during the last seven years. Why that desperate haste in 1918, that suddenness by which soldier voters were taken unawares ? After the Elections the same mistrust of the Army. First General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien tried to get the ex-Service men to come together into one great League. They agreed ; the politicians put a spoke in his wheel—the agreement never ran, never came to anything. Later on, in 1918, I presided over a conference which had for its aim the bringing together, under one umbrella, of all the organisations dealing with ex-Service men ; for what had lately been one Army had by then been allowed, nay encouraged, to drift into groups, often antagonistic groups, instead of holding together in one confederacy. For months we worked, interviewing all sorts and conditions of ex-Service men : deputations from the Grand Fleet ; deputations from Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham ; deputations from the Comrades, from the Association and from the Federation. The representatives who came to argue out the matter with us sported every shade of political colour from true blue Tory to Extremist red. But whatever the tinge of their neckties they had all a tie of another sort up their sleeves—the Army, the Navy, united them in one great family sentiment, a memory of dangers and sufferings well and impartially shared.



Right through those numerous gradations of political opinion ran a vertical column of steel, binding them together and making possible the free agreement reached at the end. No one had ever even once suggested at any of our meetings (as had once or twice been suggested outside) that members of this League should "drop politics." Politics cannot be cut out of the life of a civilian, for then he has no way of expressing his views except by a brick-bat. All we wanted was to save our old war comrades from being divided, so that they would not, as a class, be ruled and be ruled out of it by the stay-at-homes. Had they held to their individuality, no party would have cared to be unfair to them as a class—no trades union would have dared. So at last all were agreed. The compact was made and, at the eleventh hour, Authority became persuaded that there was danger to the Constitution in permitting four million of the best men in the State to foregather in social friendship.

Now in May, 1921, at last the representatives of the Associations have fixed up a combine. But what a loss of force; what splintering up of the soundest views; what hard luck both for the ex-Service men and for their country. For small local unions have crystallised into independence in the meantime, and I doubt if there will ever be the great association there might have been. I have likened the opinion of an Army to a column of steel running vertically through layers of classes and syndicates, holding them together, lending them a core of consistency. The Army was composed of the best men in the country, and the ex-Service men are still the best men in the country,

but the Unionists of the right wing and the Extremists of the left wing have equally been terrified lest they should draw together.

During three parts of the European massacre we alone possessed a Volunteer Army. We alone possess ex-Service men who are, in the main, ex-volunteers. In the days following the murder of Cæsar the letters of prominent Romans have a constantly recurring phrase, "What will the veterans think of it?" Who here cares a tinker's *dam* what the ex-Service men may think? They have been divided, split up, set against one another, lost. We, more than any other people, possessed an Army and possess ex-Service men whose spirit was worth guarding and preserving. What have we done with them? Disorganised them, dispersed them, let them creep back into trade (if they were lucky enough to find favour in the eyes of the men who jumped their jobs when they went to war): as to the rest—barrel-organs, monkeys, and German brass-bands.

To-day we are paying the price for what, in effect, is our ignorance of our own Army. We don't know it now. We are afraid of the demobbed instead of being afraid of the mob. A voluntary service Army should be a mould for turning out good citizens, good settlers: only, they must be understood, they must be given a chance; and the first step that way is to study an Army in the abstract. .

## CHAPTER II

### KNOWLEDGE OF ARMIES

Never, in history, so far as we know it, have the people had more variegated chances of studying armies—their strong points and their weak points. Never have they seemed so content to fold hands and continue to accept armies at face value—so many divisions, so much force.

The Japanese Army? We are anxiously weighing the pros and cons of the Japanese Alliance. Have the Imperial Conference anxiously weighed the value of the Japanese Army? Have they thoroughly satisfied themselves of the relative "force" represented respectively by a battalion of the Grenadier Guards and a battalion of the Imperial Japanese Guards? Have they been well posted as to the differences between the northern and southern Japanese Divisions; the Second, let us say, and the Twelfth? I should doubt it, and yet these are the vitamins of politics. When we ally ourselves to an Army which has followed Count Nogi and Kuroki we are moored to the solid rock; when we try to fix up futures with the Count Okumas and other tall talkers we cast our anchor into the quick-

sands. The Army is Japan ; the politicians, mere veneer ! A military compact comes under the code of Bushido ; a political agreement comes under the Chinese code of " Squeeze." As military allies we may serve as a *liaison* between the Far East and the Far West. If we cease to be military allies the Pacific had better be re-named, for nothing will then stand between the English-speaking union and a Russo-Japanese-German counter-combine. Mr. Harding may then die happy :—he will have gone one better than Dr. Woodrow Wilson.

• The future of our own Army ? How much does that depend upon the feelings of the ex-Service men who are being subjected to the very same influences which brought about the ruin of the returned Roman Legionaries ? The influence, I mean, of the peace which has been built upon their victory ! During the Second Punic War the sturdy peasant proprietors of Italy were swept for seventeen years into the conscription machine. Whenever they won a victory they took their indemnity out, on the spot, in slaves. These swarms of captives were sent to Italy, and when the ex-Service men got back they found combines—*Latifundia* they were called in those days—working groups of farms, for nothing, with those very slaves their flocks of arms had put at the disposal of the Senators. They could not compete ; so they drifted into Rome to eke out a wretched existence on unemployment doles of corn. The situation repeats itself to-day. The Entente Armies have conquered the German Armies. There are railways nowadays, so we don't bring the Germans actually to work for us in Wales. But we make them dig out the coal

in their own country and hand it over to the French. The French, getting their coal for nothing, sell it abroad at a price which is rendering it impossible for our ex-Service men to compete. So the soldiers save their country and lose their living—Rome and the *Latifundia* once again.

The Army of the U.S.A. ? What a change since 1903, when I went all over the country seeing the sparse handfuls of regulars and manœuvring with the States Militia. There was no greater change sprung upon the world when the Japanese put off their chain armour and cashiered their two-sworded Samurai than there is to-day when the Americans have been led by self-determination Wilson into battle. What is the value of their Army ? Reader, you can't get near it without devoting some time and study to the points of an Army ; to the sweat and blood and science and skill and spirit which go to the making of an Army !

Enormous economic movements are brought about originally by Armies and must react on the future of Armies. From many points of view there has never been a moment when all the elements of the art of war have been so much in the melting-pot as at present. A little change in one direction and quality gets the complete whip hand of quantity ; a little change in another direction and the hordes of Asia may swamp our Western civilisation ; a tiny discovery in a third and the whole face of war will be altered and all its historical machinery be thrown upon the scrap-heap. Never, then, has it been so essential as to-day that we should keep our minds alert, elastic and open to the knowledge of Armies. We shall best prepare those minds

for the future by working up what we can learn about the features of war in the first part of the twentieth century, as we, I will not say know it, but as we think we know it to-day. Let us make a start by trying to lay down the factors which seem to have played leading parts in the Great War, leaving out sea and air factors, each a vast subject in itself:

(1) Armies animated by great traditions, not resting upon them, ever jealously keeping themselves in touch with rivals (information); armies up to date in all their appointments, methods and material; armies upon which levies like our Territorials and K. troops can form themselves.

(2) The patriotism; the tenacity of the citizen (tradition: education).

(3) Efficiency at the helm (selection: Commander-in-Chief *versus* Chief of General Staff).

(4) Numbers, material, wealth, position, communications.

(5) Pre-war organisation, whereby shape and balanced harmony could be given, when needed, to the national assets under (2) and (4).

These five axioms will be traversed from various points of view. Axioms may be—always. Read, for instance, the opening twelve words of the vital Chapter VII in our Field Service Regulations, Part I, printed reverentially, as might be a super-axiom or the views of the twelve Apostles, in large deeply-leaded type:

“Decisive success in battle can be obtained only by a vigorous offensive.” Here the War Office in one sentence lays down its *sine qua non* for success, and shows at the same time that it does not under-

stand the special fighting character of the British soldier. As it turns out, there would have been as much sense, neither more nor less, in saying, "Decisive defeat in battle can only be gained by a vigorous offensive." The phrase entirely begs the question of an everlasting controversy: Napoleon—Von Moltke *versus* Wellington—Von Clausewitz. So long as it stands enthroned there in its leaded type it is a dogmatic denial of everything that happened in a war where all the worst defeats were sustained by a vigorous offensive: i.e. Loos, Passchendaele, Verdun, and that final overthrow which began on March 21, 1918; not to mention that the whole war was a German offensive, and that Germany was defeated whilst actually in France.

Another super-axiom, always in the mouths of the Westerners during the war, was that the only objective in war should be the main Army of the enemy. Cribbed from the Continent, this axiom, so-called, became an absurdity in the mouth of a British soldier. Did we beat Philip of Spain or Louis of France by overthrowing their main Armies? Did we not beat Napoleon by seizing and defending a morsel of Portugal? Did we not beat Russia by seizing and defending a morsel of the Crimea? Had not Japan in the last great war defeated Russia by besieging Port Arthur? Was it the defeat of the German main Army or the overthrow of the Turkish and Bulgarian Armies which brought the great war itself to a close?

So much for axioms. I only hope ten years hence my axioms may stand better.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A new F.S.R. has just been brought out, but the argument as to axioms still holds good.

So now let us get on and consider number (1)—an Army, the essential subject of my book, a subject so big that it must be taken bit by bit: first organisation, next discipline, then training. For these are the trinity which go to make an Army (systems—codes—education); they are methods which we can think out, discuss, apply. When we have done with them the back of this book ought very nearly to be broke—certainly the back of the writer; but there will still remain three other factors—three other features of Army-making—which do not fall so obviously as the first three within range of our prevision or improvisation:—

(1) Numbers, the gift of women.

(2) Genius, the gift of God.

(3) Patriotism—*morale*—Religion—Fanaticism:—force without a name—fire stolen from Heaven, in virtue of which naked, half-armed, undisciplined Fuzzy-Wuzzy may break, has at least penetrated, that arch-essence of organisation, discipline and training—a British Infantry square.



## CHAPTER III

### HIGHER ORGANISATION

An Army is to a nation what a "life-preserver" is to a citizen—so long as the burglar does not get hold of it it preserves. Put in another way: an Army is a lethal weapon forged by a Government for the hand of a Commander; and, just as there are weapons no end, so also there are several sorts of Armies, Governments and Commanders.

Governments lie beyond my ken. The General is still caviare to the General. Here, greatly daring, I have taken an Army as my theme—that mould of steel which fixes bodies and souls into another pattern from those of agriculture or commerce.

We pride ourselves on belonging to a mechanical age; we live like lamps upon oil; we float upon our science; we puff ourselves up considerably about petrol. When our rare skulls are ranged in the museums of a colder and more slowly-spinning world, we shall probably be classified as the racial spendthrifts who tore from the bowels of mother earth her hoarded heritage of coal and sucked from her veins the very last drops of her stores of liquid sunlight. No matter; we've got to go ahead, if only to escape the deluge. Armies, too: they must be re-baptised in oil; they must learn to salute their own engines; they will only be escorts

to engines in the days now upon us—or else, they will be destroyed by some foreign Army whose General Staff *anticipated* instead of being dragged along, reluctantly, by the scruff of the neck, so to say, in the wake of Science.

Seeing these things are to be, let me open my outline of an Army, as it now is, by a mechanical parable. Imagine an immense railway system, created but not in use, held in reserve to meet a definite emergency which may emerge on any indefinite date, a date certain (with the British) to be fixed by the Directors of another, and a rival, system, instead of by its own. Once a year, and once a year only, the railway is allowed to be partially opened to traffic for a week (manœuvres): for the remaining fifty-one weeks not only are there no train services, but the locomotives are stripped, many of their essential parts being stacked in out-of-the-way parts of the Kingdom. Yet, let the signal be given, and in four days' time the parts of the engines have to be assembled, wheels have to be fixed to dismantled trucks, cushions have to be fixed to the first-class carriages, the personnel must be at their posts, the coal—mountains of it—has to be on the spot, and a huge, complicated, most rapid and crowded process of transportation and movement comes straightway into being—provided—the rival company has not sandbagged the manager or dropped a few bombs upon the terminus.

Take now a piece of that system—a locomotive—and for further illustration compare it to a battalion. A Colonel wants to create a battalion; a manufacturer wants to make a machine.

## BATTALION.

Raw lads are enlisted. They are dressed in uniform and formed into small squads.

The squads are formed into sections and are roughly knocked into shape.

The sections are formed into platoons and companies and drilled.

The companies are formed into the battalion.

The battalion is held together by Orderly Room, N.C.O., and discipline.

A many-headed mob has become a battalion. The Colonel's word will act upon it as the autumn wind upon a heap of dead leaves when it lifts up the multitude and impels them whither it listeth. One word and it will spit fire; another word and it will advance to the conquest of numbers.

In either case atoms, insignificant in themselves, have been fashioned, grouped and welded until

## MACHINE.

Ore is brought to the surface. Metal is run off into ingots of uniform size.

Parts of the machine are roughly knocked into shape.

The various parts are grouped and perfected.

The finished parts are assembled.

The machine is held together by clamps, rivets and steel framework.

A heap of rubbish has become a locomotive. At the driver's touch it will belch forth steam, advance to the conquest of space.

they have assumed an infernally significant aspect.

My battalion and my machine are only helps. A simile is not a photograph; at best it is only a coincidence between silhouettes. Neither image gives any clue to the genesis of either the battalion or the locomotive. Some one some inventor—must originally have conceived the idea: other minds must since have worked upon that original conception. There have, as a matter of history, been many minds at work on the business of Army-making, and at least two types of mind:

(a) The organising mind—the planning mind—which runs backwards and forwards between the particular and the principle; classifying, putting two and two together; saying to itself the balance of power is shifting, we must make new friends; we have too much of that thing, we must get rid of some of the other thing; this is unsymmetrical, that is an excrescence; cavalry will have to make way for aeroplanes, we can't afford both, so let us away with the old-fashioned; first-class carriages are anachronisms; the tank is a legitimate descendant of Hannibal's barded elephants, we must keep a flock of them; the idea has been tested, there is a great future in it; or, vice versa, oil is going to run dry; stud farms should be started forthwith for the resuscitation of the horse. This, in modern parlance, is a G.S. mind.

(b) The administrative mind which goes turning away at the grindstone without going beyond the emergencies of the moment and the expedients necessary to cope with them; without pausing to take stock and reflect whether the energy might not be better applied on some quite different system.

Both of these minds are staff minds: they are staffs to support the footsteps of the Commander, a person who is, or was supposed to be until 1870, gifted with inspiration, magnetism and impulse. From 1870 until the 14th April, 1918, the mantles of great Commanders have fallen mainly upon the shoulders of Staff-Officers; but this will not endure, and in any case, one of the chief-functions of whoever holds the post of Commander is to dovetail these two types of Staff Officers so that each may work without friction within its own sphere.

Recent history gives us a very good sample of Army-making in a hurry and on the grand scale. In 1870 Japan determined to adopt Western civilisation. To that end the first requisite was a modern Army, and as, with her distinguishing practical good sense, she knew she possessed no inventor, she decided to copy. The moment was fraught with vital issues to the unconscious continents of Europe and America. Japan had the wide world at her feet to choose from. The wide world was hers to choose from because she possessed force. Force was hers because she possessed an officer-caste ready made in the Samurai, and an unrivalled material for rank and file or lower-deck ratings in a people brave by tradition and made trebly more brave by patriotism and religion.

The tremendous question Japan had to ask herself was this: Would she remain an island, choose overseas empire, and equip herself for that task by a voluntary service army and an unrivalled fleet; or, would she decide in favour of becoming a vast continental power, and equip herself for

the work by just as much fleet as she could afford after paying the crushing taxes, direct and indirect, for a nation in arms?

There were several continental armies on view, and Japan did toy awhile with the French type, but Sedan settled that question definitely in favour of Germany. As to the Overseas Empire concept, there was only one model—Great Britain. History holds nothing resembling what is undoubtedly England's own great political invention—nothing nearer, that is to say, than Greater Greece and her colonies from 600 B.C. to 400 B.C. The Russians, Germans, French, like the ancient Romans, aimed at continuity of dominion, and like country squires were always dreaming of the acreage of an estate, contained and self-supporting, within a ring fence. The British, for their part, made no account of the interposition of foreign countries between the homeland and the outlying provinces; partly because they took a more imaginative and spiritual view of Empire, regarding it as a union of hearts rather than as a Zollverein or a taxable area; partly because they looked upon the seas of the world as links, not as breaks; mainly because, under their wonderful voluntary system, their Army was keen to see the world, and as ready to take on a ten years' tour in the tropics as to mount guard over the Tower of London.

Thinking over things very carefully since my long stay with the Japanese Armies in Manchuria, it now seems clear to me that Japan ought to have copied England, but was not imaginative enough. A great deal of imagination would have been needed, for in 1864 we had played a despicable part and,

in 1870, our attitude was at best feeble. Prussia and her Hohenzollern star had shone forth brighter and brighter on each of those unhappy occasions. Fortunate indeed was it for the union of the English-speaking races that this was so, and that the rays of the rising sun were caught by the flash of a mailed fist in the West. Else, *had* Japan taken the island imperium as her model, *had* she raised a voluntary service, overseas service, type of Army, she was bound to come into fell collision with Greater Britain and the United States. Successful, the Pacific and its islands were hers; the Chinese Ports, the Yangtse River, the Malay States and Ceylon were inevitably hers; North America west of the Rockies; India—Australasia! Who knows? Did she choose the Roman type of an Empire, swelling out continuously and solidly from its core, broadly based on the absorption, colonisation and social organisation of Korea and South Manchuria, the choice was equally bound to bring her into collision first with China, next with Russia; to absorb her energies, her capital, and her people into Korea and Manchuria; to tempt her into Siberia. The worst of this method was that it involved compulsory service, which must draw both interest and cash from the fleet<sup>1</sup> and must hamper her at every turn if she should ever wish to garrison an overseas conquest.

But at that time and for long afterwards, as I can bear witness, the Japanese, apt pupils of Prussia, saw nothing of the weak sides of Conscription, and looked upon it as a positive advantage. So

<sup>1</sup> Just before the outbreak of the great war, Japan was forced to reduce her naval estimates by seven millions sterling.

*the Army was made, and the policy inevitably followed the type of Army.*

Since Paris awarded the apple, no choice more embarrassing. On the one hand, there was always the greater homogeneity of spreading slowly from the centre, of making good the Japanisation of Korea before launching out into distant conquests, i.e. of giving the Japanese girls a broader foundation on which to build their pyramid of slant-eyed children. This might well have seemed the more prudent course to a prudence-loving council of elder statesmen; and there was always the hope, by keeping the main force of the nation intact, of capturing China by one magnificent coup. On the other hand, world empire is glorious; in ten years' time some rich trophies, very pleasing to the national prestige and pride, might have been expected to adorn overseas adventures: the continental system of absorbing Korea and Manchuria must take, at the lowest estimate, a hundred years to carry into effect; and as to China, had not former conquerors mysteriously lost their own identities even as they took their seats, complacent, on the Dragon Throne? Who sets to work to swallow the Celestial octopus had better be sure he has the bigger swallow. Thus did the Japanese waver but once, the Prussian model had been copied; Japan only seemed to have a choice of policy: actually she had lost the option.

In comparing these rival systems I have hazarded the suggestion that the Japanese may have made a bad choice. But what shall be said of us who failed at the supreme moment to make use of our own traditional method?



Amphibious warfare, combined with voluntary service, is the peculiar strength which is our own special patent, and yet we do not understand it; we have never got at the root of the secret of our triumph over Napoleon and the continental system one hundred years ago, otherwise, surely, we would have developed that same plan more swiftly and forcibly both in the Baltic and in the Black Sea in '14, '15. But I believe myself that slowly the lesson of the Dardanelles will make itself felt, and that, whether sea or air be the medium, we will muster up, next time, sufficient courage and faith in ourselves to give the ideas of Pitt an adequate recognition and an adequate peace-time organisation.

Anyway, Japan made her choice, and what was a gain to Anglo-Saxondom became, for the moment, a loss to China and Russia. After some hesitations she copied the German Army. No half measures: she copied it as closely as a forger copies the depositor's signature. "*En gens pratiques que nous sommes, nous avons jugé que le meilleur moyen... était de suivre au pied de la lettre,*" said one of their General Staff-Officers, and when it is remembered that their supply and transport regulations were translated verbatim from the German, and that the deployment for the battle of the Yalu was *precisely* that of a German Army Corps at a cut-and-dried field day, it will be understood that no dangerous originality was allowed to intervene.

What we have to learn, therefore, from this last and greatest experiment by the Japanese in army-manufacture had better be learnt from the original; but before I go on to try and draw lessons from the

creation of the modern German Army, I want to save myself from a charge of having overlooked the undoubted political advantages gained by an old nation which, in a matter of that sort, is chosen as a model by a new nation. The original, in that case, gets a grand opportunity to drive its roots well down into the vitals of the plagiarist: the keenest and best-educated of the new Army, i.e., of the nation, learn to think and speak German; the unarmed part of the nation—the women and children—also, during the process, have to gravitate towards the German ideal. The German military officer has proved himself a most active and highly successful proselitising agent. In 1908, when I was in Constantinople, there was a reaction in favour of England, but it was fore-doomed: the German Army system, the Great German General Staff delegates and Krupp's agent at the Golden Horn had got too good a grip of the Turkish Army—the only part of that Empire which mattered. In Manchuria during 1904, 1905, three-fourths of the Japanese General Staff were German-trained, German-speaking men. In Kuroki's First Army there was only one Staff-Officer speaking Russian and French; one speaking English; all the rest were not only German-trained, German-speaking, German-thinking men, but were spoken of in German slang terms by the young regimental officers as *Kaisermänner*. As in the case of any Conscript country, the Army was the National League of Youth, the vital part of Japan; the Navy was British in sentiment, but, counting heads, that was a negligible quantity. This penetration of the German ideal into the farthest East was military;

*it has yet to bear its fruits*, and do not let us fall into the mistake of overlooking a principle because, owing to an almost superhuman effort and our fine racial tenacity, we have smashed those who had espoused it.

Who created this model, copied by the Japanese, admired by some amongst ourselves? Von-Roon, War Minister<sup>1</sup> of the Prussian Army. He, in his great brain, conceived the machine as a whole, and planned it out into its smallest details. There is no useful purpose to be served in going back farther, to Alexander, Cæsar, Frederick the Great, or Napoleon. In that force, created by Von Roon, a force which expired, so we hope, on the 11th November, 1918, we have the latest word on army manufacture—the typical army—and, for its own especial purpose of a short range, short time, weapon, it stood supreme, enabling the German Empire to throw every iota of its strength into the contest from the moment the word mobilisation went forth. When the range and the time drew out longer and longer, the machine, and with it the nation, was, for the time being, absolutely used up—finished!

Von Roon's Army was the greatest Army the world has ever seen: built only for a six-months' spurt, it held the best half of the world at bay for years. The conception was, in many respects, original. How did Von Roon come to find himself free to concentrate upon constructing a new

<sup>1</sup> In continental armies the War Minister corresponds exactly with our Adjutant-General, so far as organisation is concerned. In addition, he shoulders the administrative duties performed, with us, by the Quartermaster-General.

machine? How on earth did he do it? The father of the gods begot Minerva by a thought: did Von Roon shut both eyes and compress his brow until, full-armed, an Army broke out from his brain? Not exactly; very few things in our modern world are as original as the birth of the Goddess of Wisdom. Von Roon took his stand upon the Cabinet Order of 1821, which was not original at all, but was borrowed—translated—cribbed from Wellington's Peninsular system. An exactly parallel instance to the invention of aniline dyes; an Englishman got the idea; English Government let the idea drop; the Germans got hold of it and worked it for all it was worth. (N.B.—In both these cases the idea was worth a good deal.)

In this order the actual recruitment, organisation and maintenance of the Army—the business of the Army—was definitely entrusted to a special department,—whilst the more abstract consideration in the evolution of Armies—the dangers to be apprehended, the best way to meet them, the scale of preparations—the adoption or rejection of innovations in training, weapons, etc., etc.,—was confided to another special department. Only in virtue of this specialisation was Von Roon enabled to devote his whole energy to army-making; only in virtue of this specialisation was Von Moltke enabled to focus clear, untroubled rays of thought upon training his War Staff and covering futures in war risks.

Under the German system we may imagine the General Staff saying to the War Minister that their new schemes demanded the creation of an extra Army Corps. The request would probably be accompanied by a rough estimate of cost. The

War Minister<sup>1</sup> would criticise the scheme from every point of view. Almost certainly he would find the cost underestimated. The Kaiser and his Imperial Chancellor would listen to the War Minister<sup>1</sup> on that point, for he is the responsible official who will have to create the Army Corps. Eventually, let us suppose, he agrees the thing can be done; sanction is given, and the War Minister sets to work. When he has finished all recruit training, and has, in fact, created the Corps, he hands it over to the General Staff, who take up its war training and work the new formation into their various war schemes.

The term General Staff is something of a pitfall for the unprofessional professor or amateur war correspondent. Even now, after the war, G.S. remain to some extent an exotic pair of capitals in England, and when our writers are by way of expounding their true meaning it often transpires that they have only been studying von Schellendorf, and that they lack intimate understanding. They are too much inclined to run away with the idea that the great General Staff does everything. They *may*, under the heading "policy," poke their fingers into almost any pie. But the ideal great General Staff should, in peace time, do nothing! They deal in an intangible stuff called thought. Their main business consists in thinking out what an enemy may do and what their own Commanding Generals ought to do, and the less they clank their spurs the better that business will be done.

The General Staff have to be broad—wide. They

<sup>1</sup> With us the Adjutant-General and Quartermaster-General combined.

ought to be as wide as the wide, wide world. They should start from a study of the science of life. They should realise that the spiritual necessity of living dangerously is as exacting to nations as is the physical necessity to man's body of a thyroid gland. The incurable aimlessness of hand-to-mouth politicians is their enemy at home—their enemies abroad are, potentially, the rest of the world. So they must keep weighing the chances and watching, lest we succumb some day to a League of Nations Combine with a monopoly of aeroplanes and tanks. To weigh their resources against the resources of friendly nations and say what is wanted—new formations, an alliance, aeroplanes—to redress the balance whenever it sinks against them, that is their main business. As human beings, as Christians, our minds may sympathise warmly with the statesmen who say war with such and such a nation is so unthinkable, so unnatural, that they refuse to prepare for it even to the extent of thinking of it. But the General Staff-Officer is an historian. No more need be said.

Policy in war, the elucidation of all pending military problems, is their special function and, working back from it, we get to peace policy and preparation in peace for war. During peace the General Staff is, or should be, partly a thinking department, partly a preparing department. The Adjutant-General is the head of a doing department. The General Staff think of things; the Adjutant-General makes them; the Quartermaster-General moves, houses, feeds them.

The command and staffing of armies lies beyond the scope of this treatise; also, the methods by which supply, equipment or ordnance are provided

or fortresses built. I have confined myself to indicating, in outline, the relative functions of the two great officers responsible for determining, broadly, the size and type of Army and the methods of training it (the Chief of the General Staff); and for organising, raising and disciplining an Army (the Adjutant-General). Also, I may suitably add here my own firm opinion that these two officers should, under the Secretary of State, be "heads" and that ordnance, supply, finance, should be "tails."

During peace the General Staff should touch solid earth only in the matter of training the troops. Their métier is to reflect, aim, plan, plot, weigh, co-ordinate and suggest. They are not expected to be practical—if their demands keep short of insanity, that will do. They may ask the Adjutant-General to give them the moon—the onus lies on him.

The Adjutant-General walks; he has no wings. The C.I.G.S. (Chief of the Imperial General Staff) may clamour for guns, aeroplanes, tanks, a new rifle; he (the A.-G.) may know quite well that a cubit can only be added to the existing stature of the Army by melting a limb or cutting down its girth. Ordinarily he does not, as Adjutant-General, question desirability. *That* lies outside his province. He confines himself to feasibility. He may, for instance, only be able to add to the artillery by robbing the arteries: i.e. the guns can only be manned at the expense of the supply and transport; or, he may be able to state positively that the men, or the cash, do not exist, when—*cadit quæstio*! But, if the ways and means admit of it, he agrees and sets to work. The moment the work is finished the General Staff take delivery.

To a studious soldier, I and my remarks may seem like a parrot repeating A B C. To a civilian they may seem fresh, but it will be the freshness of something quite apart from his own daily bread, fortune, career. So let me suggest to the soldier that if these military axioms are stale, he had better see to it in future that they are acted upon; and, as to the civilian, let me here assure him that he would be a happier, richer, more contented citizen to-day, belonging to a more closely-knit, more famous Empire, if all the truisms put forward here by me had not, just before the war, been flouted—swept to one side—as if Wellington, Von Roon, Von Moltke, Lord Roberts, had never existed.

Our world exists not only for soldiers and civilians but also for women, who, we are told, are the most striking phenomena in actuality, who take, amongst other things, an impartial view of man, as man, whether he wears uniform or mufti. Let me put this parable up to them: after all, when women do do a thing, they do it to do *that* thing, *not* because they want to do other things. Suppose a woman was running a big house. Suppose also that her cook (Chief of the General Staff) takes the opportunity of a particularly important dinner-party to dish up a disgusting Irish stew which gives so many stomach-aches to the assembled guests that she, the mistress, is positively forced to make a show of getting rid of her. So now the edict of the sack goes forth, and the good lady of the house finds herself in a fix: the shooting season is coming on—and no cook! What *do* you imagine she does? She says to herself, "Our last parlourmaid (Adjutant-General) was a pattern of all the virtues. There



has never been any parlourmaid in my house to touch her—she was so honest, hard-working, exact; a grand disciplinarian, never a button awry—silver polished up to the nines; the house used to go like clockwork; all the other servants respected her. I have it!! I'll make her cook!!!” And a splendid cook that parlourmaid was, so long as there were no dinners to cook—but then came the first engagements of the shooting season!

There stands my appeal to women's good sense: I ask, would any woman be so foolish as the lady of the house I have described; and yet, what she is supposed to have done is exactly what the British Government did do in 1914. When, in the spring of that year in Ireland, Hubert Gough forced the P.M. to shelve the Heads of the War Office, a new C.I.G.S. had to be selected. Then it was that Mr. Asquith remembered the ex-Adjutant-General to the Forces, and put in Charles Douglas. Now, as a brother officer, as one who had known, admired and respected Douglas for forty-five years, I say to civilians (the Army knows) that my parable of the parlourmaid does not exaggerate this appointment. Douglas was *Adjutant* to our Regiment, the Gordons, during the Afghan War. He was *Adjutant* in the first Boer War. He became a Deputy Assistant-*Adjutant-General*; then an Assistant-*Adjutant-General* at Aldershot; then an Assistant-*Adjutant-General* at the War Office; then a Deputy-*Adjutant-General*; then the best *Adjutant-General* we have ever had at the War Office, although that great post had been held by great men, namely, Wolseley, Buller and Evelyn Wood. But Douglas was not only the only *Adjutant-General* we have

ever had who served out his full time in that post, he was a better Adjutant-General than any of them, because he had not, like those other three men, any other fish to fry, any hankerings after policy, intelligence, or coming campaigns to disturb his mind from its lifelong concentration on regulations, discipline, recruiting and recruit-training. All his energies and hopes ever since he, a youth of two and twenty, used to drill me, a boy of nineteen, had centred on keeping what he had in apple-pie order; in doing what he was told, and seeing that others did what they were told; never a moment wasted on the why and wherefore or future; all for attention to the business that lay to his hand until, as a reward for his fine services as Adjutant-General to the Forces, he was given the Command on Salisbury Plain, and then the Inspector-Generalship to the Forces, in which two posts it became evident that he was through and through an Adjutant; that his great and unquestioned value to the Army was as a disciplinarian and administrator.

What made Mr. Asquith put Sir Charles Douglas into a post so foreign to his character, predilection and experience? What made Douglas accept it? Mr. Asquith may not have realised the differences I have been trying to set forth—the essential differences between General Staff and Adjutant-General qualifications; he may not have known his man; he may just have thought that what the Army most wanted at that moment was a firm, just, unbiased disciplinarian, and that nothing else much mattered. The last reason I think it must have been, for, surely, both Lord Haldane and Colonel Seely would have fully informed him on

stars ; and the heavens were very cloudy, the fog of war hung low. A smaller S. of S. for War would at once have recalled Sir Douglas Haig from France to the War Office to help him. K. would not do that.

Take the question of the interview of the Secretary of State with Sir John French on the 1st of September, '14. Lord French has given us the full story in his book, claiming that Lord K.'s action in coming over to Paris to issue orders to him was unwarranted. Quite true. In South Africa no one was more sensitive than Lord Kitchener himself to any intervention. In those days there was no Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Since then that great office has been created. In the melting pot of war the relative powers of Governments, Commanders and Chiefs of Staff became fluid. The Germans' Von Moltke and Falkenhayn were supreme till they merged in the Hindenburg-Ludendorff combine. The Joffre *régime* is followed by something less personal till it ends in the personality of Generalissimo Foch. With us the powers of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff were what he could make them. If he could gain the P.M.'s ear and handle the Army Council it was for him to co-ordinate the Eastern and Western fronts. Wishing to arrest the retreat of the British Army he could have called a meeting of the Army Council and have armed Lord Kitchener for his journey with alternative sets of orders signed by the Secretary, War Office. Then, whether K.'s action was right or wrong, at least it would have been valid. His orders might have been disobeyed on plea of tactical urgency, as Steinmetz disobeyed the orders of Von

Moltke, but there could have been no question as to their legitimacy.

A deadly error lay at the foundations of our War Office like the wire-worm that waits and waits till spring sends sap through the roots. This was the idea, that the Chief of the Imperial General Staff should, on the outbreak of war, be made into the Commander-in-Chief in the field, his place being filled by an improvisation. Just imagine if the Prussians in 1870 had, on the declaration of war, given Von Moltke command of an Army, and had appointed, say, the Red Prince to be Chief of the General Staff? Well, it was our settled plan to do what we cannot even imagine the Germans being so foolish as to do; only, miraculously, Providence arose when the appointed hour drew nigh—Providence, the firm ally of the British, who, assuming the semblance of Hubert Gough, caused the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir John French, to be removed some months before the outbreak of war. French was thus set free to rest a little before taking up the command of the Forces in France, whilst time was given for a successor to be chosen, a successor who would be able to get some grip of the reins, and to look round him ere the storm burst. Providence, in fact, had stepped in at the eleventh hour. War was almost on us. The stage had been cleared so that we might set our scenery in order for the critical last act of the drama. So we set to work and, for reasons which could only have been political and peace-time reasons, put in an Adjutant-General to fill the vacant post. Even our pocket Providence, long-suffering, indulgent, could not quite swallow that!

of Wellington and his Staff-Officer, Murray; forgotten by the Victorians; copied and elaborated by the Prussians; recognised as a prodigal son and welcomed back with fatted calves by the Esher Commission in 1904; strengthened by Haldane, whose work tended more and more to make the Chief of the General Staff right hand of the Government and brain of the Army; carried on by Seely, whose quick sympathy and soldierly instincts helped to hold every one together—knocked out of gear at one stroke with the best of good intentions but the most hell-paving results. For the mischief was cumulative and carried on. Sir Charles Douglas, by his death, bequeathed a bankrupt office to his successor. Sir James Wolfe Murray was an able soldier and a courteous gentleman, but he knew little of General Staff work, and he was completely bewildered by the kaleidoscopic Kitchener. During his tenure the greatest appointment in the British Army lay dormant—produced nothing—not even thistles: another fine character and career spoilt by being put into the wrong place; strange to the work; strange to Lord Kitchener; finding everything already passed out of his hands; he who should have been It became it.

Not until Sir Archibald Murray, essentially a General Staff-Officer, well trained in those duties during peace and under the stress of the South African War—not till Murray (who, by a happy coincidence bore the same name as the Peninsula War Office organiser of the General Staff scheme) came back from France in March, '15, as Deputy-Chief of the General Staff, did the moribund department begin, bit by bit, to show signs of life. But

the meaning of the great appointment Haldane and Seely had meant to be the lever of our war machine, did not make itself apparent to our civilian War Cabinet until Lord Kitchener left for the Dardanelles, when, for the first time, the Army Council met and began to function whilst the General Staff raised its head and began to work hourly in touch with the Admiralty. No man did better work during the war than Sir Archibald Murray during the three months he was Chief of the Imperial General Staff; at last the round peg was fitted in the round hole, and so Murray was eulogised in the House and packed off to an executive command!

## CHAPTER IV

### ORGANISATION GENERALLY

So much for our theory of higher organisation together with an example of our practice.

The course of civilisation follows the succession of compromises effected between two categories: (a) the man attracted by expediency, tradition and all the lines of least resistance; (b) the man driven along by some inherited principle of discontent to quarrel with fat people and good things; the man forced by some restless demon to attack expediency, tradition, fashion, convention.

The clash between these two types is ceaseless, and the dust they raise is commonly called progress. Any magazine, any newspaper will furnish examples. I am writing in the month of March, and the February number of the *Royal United Service Institution Journal* is lying at my elbow: sure enough it contains quite a good sample of my meaning. "Substance or Shadow" is the title of one of its articles; a good title expressive of the way in which type (a), the solid man in possession, looks at type (b), that everlasting, that lean and hungry shadow of his which will never leave him alone to sit down and digest the good things of this life in comfort. The *motif* of the said article runs thus:

"The trend of expert opinion of the present day seems to veer rather in favour of the mechanical war machine replacing the human army. . . the stodgy-minded Briton will do well while accepting the tank as a very important adjunct, to bank on the 'last 50,000 bayonets produced,' being the factor which will win the next war. . . . In conclusion, the cavalry will never be scrapped to make room for the tanks; in the course of time cavalry may be reduced as the supply of horses in this country diminishes. This greatly depends on the life of fox-hunting, for which the class of horse required in the cavalry is used. It may therefore be necessary in the course of time to stock Government farms for this purpose or import from Australia. The stodgy-minded Britisher, as they call him, does not mean to catch at the shadow and lose the substance."

• Once the existence of the (a) type of human beings, i.e., about ninety-five per cent. of the inhabitants of these islands, has been recognised, they may be left alone, as they would like to be left alone. They are so much dead weight, but dead weight counts in the tug-of-war. They find leaders of their own species to represent them; they don't want to do more than exist, for they don't dream at nights; the howl of the wolves in the forest does not frighten them for they don't hear it; the gleam of the Celestial City does not distract them from the pursuit of the fox for they can't see it: so they carry on and are in fact every bit as necessary to human progress as is a brake to a motor-car. Yes; it is a curious reflection but worth noting that the first thing you've got to think about if you want to go fast is however you are going to stop. But in England, on that point, we need be under less apprehension than most people.

The (b) five per cent. men cannot be left alone, for they are an insistent, cut and come again sort



of person. It is not my purpose here to analyse their attributes. All I wish to say is that they may be divided into two sub-types—(1) the warm-blooded crank or “plausible enthusiast,” as the man of substance calls him in the article from which I have quoted; the artist who jumps at conclusions by intuition; (2) the cold-blooded scientist who crawls into revolution on the back of his theories; who collects masses of evidence and facts, and shows, as he believes logically, the trend of actual movements as yet quite invisible to the somnolent ninety-five. This second type is common in Germany, but with us is very rare. It digs out reams of precedents and then goes on to suggest organisations in futures. One reason (which would alone be sufficient for any but my own fellow-countrymen) why organisation should rank first in the scale of the constituents of an Army is that, in any sane or civilised system, it *must* come first. A hard saying, this, to the Anglo-Celt. He and his American cousins will always (if you don’t watch them closely) make units first and then try and fake up a scheme to fit them into afterwards.

The U.S.A. States Militia, as they were when, in 1903, I was privileged to travel round and see them, furnish the best example I can quote of systematic disorganisation. Far from there having been any notion of raising the units on some symmetrical or balanced plan, there was not any vestige (not, at least, any apparent to a visitor) of any co-ordinating authority either outside or inside the State. The units just grew. One State might have the fancy for Engineers; another for Cavalry. When I ventured to suggest that each State might

raise its quota of some particular service so that when war came they might club together and produce complete divisions, the suggestion was quoted as an amusing instance of an outsider's ignorance of the American Constitution.

But we dare not laugh ; that would not be good manners seeing we have suffered so much and so lately from the beam that is in our own eye. Even to-day there are people walking about outside of Colney Hatch, sitting in a House supposed to be the negation of Colney Hatchism, who discuss and pass Army Estimates without insisting first on being given a list of every unit in the Army with a marginal statement explaining the precise purpose this most expensive item is intended to serve.

I say it is folly to raise a single company, squadron or battery before it is known exactly what place it is to take in some definite organisation authorised for some definite purpose. The feeblest unit takes time and money and energy to produce and it is wicked to expend assets so precious, only to find, when at length an Army is organised, that some of their parts are superfluous. Our Territorial Force was well organised by counties so that groups of counties or towns, by putting their units together, made complete divisions—divisions which were actually assembled and trained every now and then. So far so good. But how many divisions were there? Fourteen. Why fourteen? Into what organised Army or Armies were these fourteen Divisions to fit?

No one surely should be so well equipped to answer that question as the Chief of the Imperial General Staff—and, as a matter of fact, he has

done so. On 1st December, 1920, he spoke as Chairman at a Lecture on Man Power published in that very same useful number of the *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* from which I have already culled the attack made by a man of substance upon his own shadow. Here are the words of the Field-Marshal :—

“ One other thing. This country of England believes, almost alone in the world, in a voluntary army. There are a great many advantages in a voluntary army ; there are a great many disadvantages in a voluntary army. But whatever the advantages, and whatever the disadvantages, there is this constant factor in a voluntary army : it solves no military problem alone—none. If you have an enormous number of volunteers you get an enormous army : you may not want it. If you have no volunteers I imagine you would get a very small army ; you may want one. But in 1914, if we take that year, there was not one single campaign that the wit of man could imagine where the right answer was : ‘ Six Regular divisions and fourteen Territorials. ’ • This country has gone back to the voluntary system. It has many advantages, but it has not the advantage and it cannot have the advantage of solving any military problem either of peace or of war.”

So the pre-war Army Council *pretended* that fourteen divisions of Territorials were demanded by a scientific defensive organisation planned by the General Staff, whereas really the number might just as well have been four or forty. Presumably the number fourteen could not have been fixed by the General Staff at all, because (we are told) “ there was not one single campaign that the wit of man could imagine where the right answer was : Six Regular divisions and fourteen Territorials ! ” Presumably the number of these unemployable Territorial divisions must have been fixed by that dull dog the Adjutant-General, because fourteen was the maximum he could raise for the money ?

But how, I ask, if this very force of six Regular divisions and fourteen Territorial divisions did happen to fit into the one single campaign that did actually take place? What about it? How if these twenty divisions were a carefully thought out, well-organised force, carried in strength to the verge of what the radical economists would stand; of just sufficient weight to be thrown into either of the scales of the Continental balance of power so as to make the opposite side kick the beam, kick the bucket, or however a knock-out may be best expressed. No! it is all very well to rub it in that we are bad organisers—blind, stupid and all the rest of it: it's a way we have in the Army; it's what Queen Elizabeth did after her carefully organised Regular Navy had defeated the scratch team of Spaniards, many of them on hired Portuguese ships, called the Armada; it is our pet plant, but I do think the men who have triumphed through those six Regular divisions and fourteen Territorial divisions, and who would have been beat to a frazzle if they had been caught mid-stream swapping them for an untried Swiss system, should not be too hard upon Haldane.

So now, just to show my impartiality, let me say that I do not quite recognise Haldane the Organiser when, speaking on his own subject recently in the House of Lords, he said that we did not need a supreme Ministry of Defence to co-ordinate Army, Navy and Air Service, because "the Staffs of the Army and Navy would always be brought up in a different way and would always deal with problems of which the others were not even conscious." Twice, he it observed, he introduces the word

"always," thereby arrogating to himself the rôle of prophet, and I hope, in this instance, of false prophet.

The Staffs of the Army and Navy will always be brought up in a different way until they are brought up in the same way. But the sooner they are brought up in the same way, the better for all of us. They should have a common doctrine and similar methods and, speaking as one who has worked in closest touch with the Navy both in peace and war, I assert positively that there is no more reason the Army and Navy should be "unconscious" of one another's problems than that Infantry and Artillery should be unconscious of one another's problems. Navy and Army were formerly under one head—the King. The finest Admiral, bar Nelson, who ever trod a quarterdeck was Colonel Blake, a very distinguished soldier. The functions of the Fleet are (1) to cut the communications of the enemy nation; (2) to keep open the communications of its own nation. The royal road to success in these endeavours is to defeat the enemy's grand fleet. The functions of an Army are: (1) to defeat the enemy's main force; (2) to seize upon his vitals. The royal road to success in these endeavours is to cut the communications of the enemy Army whilst keeping open its own communications. Passing from "function" to "action," there is no difference of principle in an encounter between squadrons of battle cruisers and an encounter between squadrons of cavalry with the horse artillery. After years of thought I feel sure that nothing will make the several British Services become "conscious" of one another's problems until we get one Minister responsible for the whole scheme of defence.

Politics have been the bane of our organisation for years, but we might hope that a Defence Minister with a strong United Services Staff would exercise a non-party influence, spinning like a gyroscope, not on the Government benches but on the top of the Speaker's mace. The truth of it is that for years and years we have raised or disbanded regular or auxiliary corps, not at all on military grounds, not in the least because we had or had not the money, but entirely on political grounds. Those who have pressed for expansion have not perturbed themselves as to where, how, or in what order, the new parts were to fit; those who have pressed for reduction have not worried as to how the complete military organism would be affected when a going part of it was capriciously picked out for scrapping. The history of the relation of successive British Administrations towards the *organisation* of their own military forces is a history of almost incredible improvidence. Penny wise in times of preparation, pound foolish in the hour of danger, whether in their economies or extravagances equally careless of the effects their action might have upon the organism, they furnish to mankind the supreme example of a people escaping through other good qualities the penalties for apparent complete lack of an orderly faculty. But with what effort—by what desperate expedients—do we achieve those successive hairbreadth escapes?

Lack of organising capacity is by no means characteristic of individual Britons. The Englishman has it in him to be a good organiser and as soon as competition pinches him, he very quickly shows it. A British railway is better organised, right through,

than a German, French or Russian railway. I speak as one who has travelled over the rails of each of the said countries longer mileage than most of their native inhabitants. Foreigners have ingenious methods of ear-marking and identifying baggage; it constantly gets lost. British porters would seem to have no method. They dab on a label anyhow—anywhere—and chuck the precious portmanteau like so much ballast into the van: invariably it comes to hand! So, too, our shipping companies. No sooner did the German ring begin to squeeze them than they fell into line and organised as naturally as a duck takes to the water. Even our coal-mining industry, now the black sheep of our flock, used until the war to be taken as a model of method both in Europe and America.

Why, then, should the present Government make so poor a showing at organisation, not only in the War Office and the Admiralty, but in all other Departments? Why is it that we have hardly begun to think of applying some of the lessons of a war period to peace preparations? Because the voters do not want to be organised. So strongly does their instinct for freedom move them that they refuse to permit Government organisation of the national services, military, naval, postal, educational, and what not to be one iota more highly developed.

The presiding genius of the British race is not a logical deity. Sealed pattern schemes mortgaging future liberty of action are anathema to it. "Carry on"; "Muddle through"; "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" may have reckless rings, but, to the Anglo-Celt, they embody a philosophy.

Following the Roman example, France and Germany make a colony to order: churches, wharves, theatres. Out go bands of officials, troops organised to finger-tips, details worked out down to the opera troupe. Contempt pours upon the hugger-mugger British whose steam cranes and ballet girls arrive years after the ships and their skippers. But, sometimes, trade slumps; colonists stay away. Then the churches, wharves and theatres remain empty. So there is something to be said for these strange British merchants and planters, who only beg their Officials and Government for God's sake to leave them alone. The mailed fist is all very well, but they would rather the State kept it in her pocket; their own plain fingers and thumbs are good enough for them; they know that a highly organised nation implies the regulation, registration and regimentation they detest: they are extremely sensitive to any attempt to turn them into machines; they seem to realise by instinct that it must, in the long run, bring about a paralysis of the individuality and go-as-you-please which are to them as the very salt of life.

In the early 'nineties one of the triumvirate, then supreme at the War Office, made to a young officer the memorable remark, "Organise the British Army and you ruin it." The subordinate, who had been working heart and soul to that very end, looked so sad that the great man condescended to amplify, affirming that organisation destroyed initiative and weakened character. My friend, who was then young, put down that remark to senile irritability. Now he is grown old himself he begins to suspect there might have been something in it. In precise proportion as highly organised systems increase the



cohesion and momentum of their mass, so they must flatten out the idiosyncrasies and clog the alertness of each of the component particles of that mass. In precise proportion as the machine becomes effective, so do the chances of evolving an engineer of initiative become smaller.

If a man is too long on a groove, he, like the horse that goes his daily round in a mill, becomes dull and dispirited. His powers of making an independent choice are weakened. The organiser thinks out a system whereby the component parts of the whole will be specially adapted to deal with the tasks which will ordinarily confront them and equips them with every adjunct of machinery which will facilitate their work and render it, so far as is humanly possible, automatic. The primary object of organisation is to shield people from unexpected calls upon their powers of adaptability, judgment and decision. At the post pillar box they are reminded to stamp their letters; in the railway carriage they are warned not to let their heads get knocked off by tunnels. The worker in a well-organised concern is put just exactly where he will feel himself most at home; where the probable contingencies are of a class with which his character will be well fitted to cope; where the strain is measured to his strength. He is not there to devise impromptu means of dealing with unrehearsed situations.

One hundred employees working in a combine, each in the special branch that best suits his capacity, will knock out two hundred small shopkeepers. But, at the end of the struggle, defeated though they have been, each of the two hundred should

be better, readier, braver fellows than any of the combine servants, bar two or three of its bosses. Inspection, regulations and tail-twisting are, in theory, educative; in practice, the direct hard knocks of the world make character.

Take agriculture. Suppose two virgin reservations to be opened for the first time to cultivation. Tract "A" is handed over to an organiser who hires servants and fixes up the whole estate in symmetrical form, so that there is neither overwork nor idleness; so that no waste as is caused by a farmer keeping a horse and cart when, for the best part of the year, there is only work for three-fourths of a cart and horse. Tract "B" is cut up into small freeholds which are given to small men to work with the aid of their families. From the economic point of view there is no comparison between the rival systems. Tract "A" will yield half as much again as "B" at one-fourth less total cost of energy. Nor is there any comparison from the point of view of humanity. Tract "A" will have produced, say, one gentleman, two bailiffs, half a dozen overseers, and one hundred hewers of wood (by order) and drawers of water (by order). Tract "B" will have produced one hundred and twenty-five yeomen—the stuff empires are founded upon—backbones of society—sound—  
independent—resourceful—such men that a society stiffened by twenty per cent. of them remains morally well nourished and capable of pulling through slumps, strikes, wars.

A member of a gang of three (or four) riveters spends a life-time holding a rivet to be hammered, or hammering a held rivet. He makes better

money than the village blacksmith who is ready to mend a baby's pram, ring a bull, shoe a horse. The riveter probably would consider the blacksmith to be a jack of all trades, master of none, but a Commander prefers the citizen who has worked the whole of his brain and not only one corner of it.

If the blows aimed at our livelihood by the "generous emulation of commerce" <sup>1</sup> force us to it, we must go on organising, I suppose, but do not let us imagine that the dose we have already swallowed has brought us any closer to the Angels. Fishwives in Edinburgh, trying to dispose of their herrings call, them "souls of men," meaning that their men had jeopardised their lives to catch them. Yes, but the seafaring man, constantly pitting his wits and courage against the elements, is making his soul every single time he boldly takes his life in his hands. If the sellers of piece goods and grey shirtings were to advertise their wares as souls of men, that would be more to the point.

One more try to strip tinsel off organisation before settling down to weigh its real merit and place in an Army.

What is a newspaper? The will of the Proprietor flowing through a hundred pens into all sorts of flowers of speech. Who is this modern Proteus? What sort of man? He may be a very human creature, fond of small children and attractive to them; kind to his relations; a man often hated but not by those who come in contact with him; a man with a clear touch of genius in his composition and armed with a strange flickering kind of courage which challenges fortune; dares the devil to do his

<sup>1</sup> See *The Millennium?* page 32.

utmost ; and then, seems suddenly to go to sleep. I love him myself—as Brutus loved Cæsar. Or, he might be a lower type altogether. A man, say, of whom it suffices to look at his face ; or another, say, of whom it suffices to read up his record. But all of them, good or bad, have one gift in common or they simply could not exist : they are organisers ; not so much organisers of bodies or of energies—their managers do that—but of minds. Now, normally, the editors, sub-editors, leader-writers, and reporters who barter their brains with those bosses are as independent as most men. They clothe the paramount will as they like and so trick it out with the play of their own fancy that half the time they can forget they are writing to order. Whilst loyally working up to the policy of the paper, they manage to secure, in fact, a fair amount of elbow-room for their own personalities. If the screw is put too heavily upon the convictions of any one of them, he can escape with his self-respect to the shelter of a rival paper.

Now set organisation to work. The boss has bought up so large, so representative, a group of papers, that he may be said to have cornered the market. What is the effect ?

In the first instance, the power of the press is enormously augmented. Previously, poison and antidote lay side by side on the bookstall ; now it is only the colour, size, type, and general politics of the papers that still appear to differ. No longer are victories won by oratory or logic, but by closing the opposition, by boycotting their letters, by refusing to report their speeches, by a process of sand-bagging, in fact. On any vital question of the day—

temperance, let us suppose, or compulsory service—the *whole* of the arguments laid before the people become *ex parte*. Yet, ultimately, as in the case of all other over-organisation, the powers of the individual newspapers decline. Unless the pen is handled with conviction it will not long convince; unless the other side gets a hearing the public lose interest. At last the people begin to take so many pinches of salt to their leading articles that, by degrees, they become “salted” like horses in South Africa and are immune to the propaganda bacillus.

And what happens to the journalists? What of Viscount Morley’s dictum that “In literature the salt of the whole thing is to be independent.” The calamity does not overwhelm at once. Slow but sure is the suppression of the man by the method, of the individual by the organisation. The big writers who have climbed to the top of the tree, they survive awhile, but in the long run!

A brilliant journalist, writing of the troubles of foreign countries, remarked,<sup>1</sup> “In spite of the obvious weaknesses of English political organisation . . . there are still vast elements of moral, as of economic, strength in this country.” Will he forgive me if I suggest to him that instead of saying “in spite of” he should have said “because of”?

And now to apply these general theories to an actual Army.

<sup>1</sup> *The Observer*, 7th December, 1913.

## CHAPTER V

### MILITARY ORGANISATION

In the early 'eighties England made her first conscious effort to emerge from military chaos and a young officer was actually paid to consider a certain abstract law of proportion called organisation. As may be imagined the bow and arrow Generals were very much upset, but there was one fine old soldier, ex-holder of some of the highest administrative posts in our Army, who was so far sympathetic that he came round a few weeks later to size up the sweeping of this new broom. He asked if there would be anything to do? The young officer replied that, barring the Cardwell system, which gave a certain coherence to the Regular Army, the whole field was a jungle, nothing but a jungle, full of overgrowths and undergrowths, and that the sweeping to be done was immense. At this the shocked veteran rose, "Why, whatever do you mean? In '78, when we were about to send a Field Force to Turkey, every single detail was correct, in order, to hand!" He honestly believed, the old boy did, we had perfected our organisation for war in the days of Disraeli. So did the Duke of Cambridge until General Sir Henry Brackenbury went within an ace of giving His Royal Highness the Field-Marshal a fit of apoplexy by telling him that, on

Continental standards, not even the first step had been taken towards organising a small expedition against savages—let alone war!

Organisation is a relative condition of being. Marshal Leboeuf was quite sincere when he said that the Army was ready down to the last gaiter button. Only, he expressed himself rhetorically. What he should have said: "Our gaiter buttons are ready—compared with our previous condition of anarchy this marks prodigious progress." Which doubtless it was!

Haldane was the first War Minister since Cardwell who poured thought and science upon the British military muddle (as a cook may pour white of egg upon a thick soup). In the interval the many good men and capable men who ruled the War Office did not include, I respectfully submit, an organiser.

*Luckily* for England, Haldane's cranium was Von Roon-shaped. *England didn't deserve Haldane.* England deserved an orator, a politician, a rich nobleman or perhaps even a "business" man. Haldane saved England—though himself he could not save—by his philosophical and organising instincts. In dealing with a part Haldane always saw the whole. Most politicians only see a part—their own part. In all the luck of England she never had a finer stroke of luck than that Scotchman. The Fates never span a more impish web for the two Kaisers than they span when, into Arnold Forster's vacant chair, slipped—with his singular, side-long step—Haldane! His Mother, magnificent specimen of Northumbrian femininity, had an inbred horror of the Germans. A cousin by marriage of her mother's was French, and this lady had told old Mrs. Haldane

when she was a small child that she and her sisters were locked up in the cellars whenever the Prussians passed, although they were allowed to look out of the windows at the troops of any other nation. This story had so great an effect upon the child's mind that when she grew up she determined that no children of hers should ever have truck with these terrors. As usual the parental prohibition created the craving. Nothing would satisfy little Richard and Elizabeth but Hegel, and a habit of thinking carried out to the absolute *nth*. So into the big room at the War Office, and on to the chair where so many budget-to-budget, expedient-seeking Anglo-Celts had sat, was ushered a philosopher who started from the assumption that Being = nothing ! Great fun, that, really ; a first-class celestial joke ! Here was a man who took nothing for granted—not even a Sergeant-Major. His mind instinctively recoiled from the existing, or “being,” and ran backwards to the, “nothing” or starting point. He first took the Rules and Regulations and created in his mind a model Sergeant-Major ; thence, by process of thought, he kept improving him until, suddenly, he ran up against a live Sergeant-Major, and no doubt found that he was by no means all he should have been.

Subjected to this critical analysis several things began to happen to the British Army. For the first time Authority had the ordinary pluck to face up to the object of our having an Army at all. To the Gladstone type of mind which had ruled the roost for so many, many years there was no worse crime than to be blunt ; to state plainly, for instance, that an Army was meant to do anything so pro-



foundly immoral as to fight. Haldane went far beyond that: he actually had the nerve to frame a scheme on the tacit assumption that we were going to fight on one side or another of the delicate equipoise of Europe—in Belgium or Flanders! That very moment everything began to fall into its place. The appalling hotch-potch of regulars, militia, yeomanry, and volunteers could at least, and at last, be measured and weighed, not *in vacuo*, but against and in comparison with a specific contingency. For the first time Authority itself got to grips with the strength, composition and object of the forces of our first line, and if the voters remained ignorant that was entirely owing to their own accursed indifference. As soon as Authority realised where it stood, Authority began to lop off excrescences and wipe out deficiencies—amidst shrieks and curses no doubt; but still the axe worked on. As an example of a progress unexampled during a hundred years of War Office, be it noted that, whereas in 1899 we sent out to South Africa one single Brigade of Infantry, *and one only*, organised exactly as it had been in peace, we had, when war was declared in August, '14, eighteen regular infantry brigades organised *precisely* as they had been during the preceding year and ready to send out.

The civilian may find it difficult to grasp the full significance of that advance, especially as its value diminishes with every week that passes in war-time. The old, rough-and-ready arrangement which held the field during the South African War and with which it must be compared, consisted in the flinging together of four battalions, drawn from anywhere, and appointing to command them, say, a popular

favourite, or the son of somebody, or a clever administrative officer from the War Office assisted by some young Staff Officers who had never been through the Staff College. I have inferred that in 1899 we had only one Brigade of Infantry to send out. This is not quite correct. We *might* have sent out three, but we deliberately broke them up—all but one—so as to extemporise a Highland and a Fusilier Brigade. We deliberately smashed up two little pieces of real organisation to make two sentimental organisations. Apparently the last word in disorganisation had been said. Yet, strange to relate, these queerly associated crowds would generally harden down into solid, homogeneous blocks within a few weeks of taking the field. The son of Somebody, and the popular favourite, rose to their responsibilities and faced the music of the Mauser like men. The clever administrator went sick or was “unstuck,” and made way for a war soldier. The start had been deplorable—the recovery was rapid. Good batteries and battalions as a basis, favoured by stress of war and the genius of a race drilled by generations of casual rulers to improvise things for themselves, had worked what would seem to be miracles to a German.

Now look at the matter this way: for the first month's fighting in '14 each of the new brigades was fifty per cent. more valuable for attack than the brigades we had in South Africa. For defence it was, say, ten per cent. better. After that month the superiority of the new Haldane brigades would tend quickly to disappear. But the first pitched battle may pitch the war away and is spoken of by serious writers as being equivalent to “half the

campaign." Fifty per cent. of half a campaign is a quarter of the whole campaign. *Quarter of a campaign gained by Haldane's rearrangement of existing figures and words!* Yes, that is an actual fact. At no cost at all; by a few pen strokes the first striking force of our Infantry was increased to an extent incalculable in terms of cash. Had French's force at Mons consisted of the identical men, guns, horses, and had they been hastily thrown together on the 1899 plan, I say most confidently there would have been no Mons Star. Put it more bluntly: Had the Great War broken out before Haldane's work had taken shape we must have begun it by losing our foothold on the Continent. We have all heard the story of the military policemen standing at the cross-roads and calling out to the stream of retreating men, "3rd Division to the right, 5th Division to the left," and of how that stream divided itself and fell at once from disorder into order. This happens to be a true story and I have an eye-witness who can authenticate it. Well, under the 1899-1906 conditions the men would not have learnt yet to which division they belonged and the disorder would have become irremediable. No end of instances might be given, did space admit, to show that the B.E.F. could never have held together under the strain of that retreat if the divisions and brigades had not been thoroughly homogeneous, thoroughly welded together, thoroughly organised.

So far I have spoken of brigades, and brigades are big things: divisions are bigger still and divisions are formed of brigades—but only in part. Here is one of Haldane's principal claims to a statue,

namely, that he created the self-sufficing, self-contained division which is the ark of the covenant of our Army. He alone did it. On his head he did it. Off his own bat he did it; lopping off excrescences, adding guns, sappers, signallers, field hospitals, and all A.S.C. administrative services.

This work was carried through without any active backing from his perfectly indifferent colleagues in face of a bitterly hostile Tory opposition and alone it would have entitled any War Minister to fame. Yet it was only the A.B.C. of Haldane's achievement. Let it be granted he was in luck in getting a virgin forest for his potato patch—even so, what a crop! An Expeditionary Force of six Regular divisions; 120,000 men instead of Arnold Forster's 5,000 men; there is the sort of round figure that should crash like a bullet into the brain of the good citizen who has been hypnotised with that well-rubbed-in phrase about Haldane's spiritual home. He made ready an advance guard of 160,000 men to attack that "spiritual home"; his predecessor had aimed at preparing (for he never really prepared them) 5,000 men! Each into their proper spheres Haldane set: first line (Regulars); special reserve to first line (Militia); second line (Territorials and Yeomanry); third line, a machine for stamping out reserve formations for the second, i.e., County Associations. He failed in nothing except the Cadet Corps, and there it was his nerve that failed. Officers' Training Corps, that was a great success, but the Cadet Corps would have added a cubit to the stature of every Briton. I must not say any more or else I will break the thread—none too tenacious in any case—of my argument. So I will

only point out in conclusion that the philosophic lawyer who did these things had organised victory.

Obviously we cannot afford to dispense with organisation. No sane soldier would dream of breaking up our brigades and divisions in order that we might go back to the old mob of batteries and battalions. Yet great as has been the gain, it is not unmixed. Formerly the Commander of a Battalion was a big dog. No Emperor has ever felt the sense of power tingle more vividly through his veins than these Tritons amongst minnows. The sovereign people take months to make some pettifogging law. The Judge is bound to listen for hours to rigmaroles and lies. The Lieutenant-Colonel of old had the habit of formulating *ukases* between each puff of his pipe. Every moment questions involving the whole future of some human being, were it only a Lance-Corporal, trembled in the balance of his brain. And, in solving them, his own character was being surely tested also—it was being strengthened to meet the heavier calls which might be made upon it in the future. Now, organisation has, at a stroke, dimmed his glory—lowered his standards. Formerly Battalion Commanders were masters, subject only to an occasional inspection. Now they are servants to the Brigade Commander, who takes the lion's share both of the glory and responsibility. What is the result? In knowledge and education the Lieutenant-Colonel gains benefit by working under the eye and at close quarters to a Colonel, who should be the pick of the men of his standing, but, all the same, the numbers of the character-forming billets in our Army have been reduced by three-fourths and it seems reasonable to

suppose that, in ten years' time, we shall pay for our higher level of education amongst senior Lieutenant-Colonels by there being few men of bold, independent judgment amongst them from whom to select our Generals.

The subordinate, too, is subtly affected by the more thorough apportionment of each part of the machine to the tasks it may have to perform. In the good old days a British subaltern thought himself equal to every task on God's earth. He was Athos, Porthos and Aramis rolled up into one. Give him the office and he would gaily sally forth, equipped with nothing more formidable than a toothbrush, to bring off any sort of coup in any known or unknown corner of the globe. With smiles, kicks, promises, he would raise some band of scallywags and, aided by them, would in due course present a thoroughly ungrateful country with a Nigeria or an Oudh. To-day, the toothbrush touch is at a discount. Young soldiers know that the contingency has already been thought out for them by others and their minds do not turn readily to the idea of improvisation. Mesopotamia, German East Africa and the Dardanelles show that they are still eager enough to try their hands at making bricks without straw, but by the time they feel assured that a plan has been pigeon-holed for the conquest of Greenland and Terra del Fuego, then they will look to the plan rather than cudgel their own brains, a result which may land us a generation hence full of followers but short of leaders.

The Japanese had a marvellously organised, a very great Army. They had no great Commander. Generals of character, chivalry, courage, and calm

they had ; also a highly trained, closely organised General Staff system, for which very reason, I feel sure, the High Command shed its personality in the anonymity of its own bureaux. They had not one man who would have put the telescope to his blind eye. Had they, instead of Kuropatkin the administrator, met that Commander, that latest reaction from super-organisation and General Staffing, called Foch—they were done ! Foch took form before system began to crush personality ; so did the only other two men on all this overcrowded contemporary canvas who wear the aura of greatness—Hindenburg and Kitchener.

The new model brigade is only a sample of what was going on everywhere in our War Office between 1905 and 1912. Under those conditions we got to know, from Divisional General to drummer boy, the exact strength, composition and object of the forces of our first line. And we could, and did, lay hands on every man Jack of them—from drummer boy to Divisional General.

Thus (1) we knew we had resources in hand to keep the Expeditionary Force fed through the first months of war.

(2) We had an idea, less defined, but still some idea, of what we wanted in the way of the Territorial Force, our second line. We knew, but we had not the nerve to say, that we wanted eighteen divisions instead of fourteen. There would have been no difficulty in raising them, given better pay. The cause of our timidity was not so much the political or Treasury obstruction as the strong hostility of the London Press, and of a great mass of gentlefolk who ought, normally, to have been

the backbone of county-raised forces. Still, though short in cadres and under strength in those cadres, there was confidence that when a crisis arose the great voluntary idea would come to the rescue; fill up the fourteen weak divisions and then duplicate them and triplicate them with the overflow.

(3) Whilst we had our County Associations' machine ready for stamping out third, fourth, fifth lines we realised, only too acutely, that we had no men pledged in advance, and prepared for in advance, to step in and be stamped out by that machine: we had no civilians ear-marked to enter the dépôts—each man the right dépôt—the moment war was declared. Whilst detesting conscription under whatever smooth alias it might masquerade, we felt, some of us, that all the manhood of the land should be registered as waiting men; not necessarily drilled or trained, or in any other way touched by their military obligations; but simply pledged and, on paper, organised to stand by ready to fill up the dépôts of every class of unit as soon as the imminence of danger seemed to justify so decisive a step.

No one has had greater faith than I have had in the volunteer; no one has fought harder for the voluntary idea than I have; no one has suffered more for his faith in it, whether in his public career or in his private friendships.

The Great War has now come along and clinched my belief into certainty; my belief, namely, in the ultimate willingness of every sane, able-bodied Englishman and Scotsman to step forward with his life in his hand when his country calls upon him for the sacrifice. But where is he to step



to? *That* point should be fixed up beforehand, for it takes a generation to work it out.

The only sane objectors were those who did not realise exactly where, when and why they were being called up. They knew they possessed certain talents valuable to the State and their common sense and patriotism were equally revolted by the thought that they were going to be misused, broken and flung aside—all to no purpose—less than no purpose—by a conscienceless, stupid machine. Had they known beforehand that their value had been already intelligently weighed and that their careers and lives, even if they were lost, would not be wasted, why then, there would have been even less hanging back than there was.

Given a little more intelligence and good will, the voluntary system might have beaten its wonderful best and seen us through the war. If Haldane's organised machinery of the County Associations had been used, as it was intended to be used, to stamp out the New Armies one after the other, the recruits would have been handled with greater knowledge of their personal concerns and capabilities and, therefore, with more tact and discrimination: also, pride of county or of town would have been harnessed to the recruiting car; also, it is clear that the increases in pay given to keep a compulsory service Army in a good temper in 1919 would have stimulated recruiting in 1916!

By creation of the part we begin to comprehend the whole. Organisation is the art, or science, of building up a symmetrical whole by a number of parts, just as the human frame is built up by heart, liver, brain, legs, etc. It is not until you have a

forefinger that you clearly grasp the advantage of a thumb. When the six complete divisions were created, they pointed the way towards a supporting organisation of similar Territorial divisions. Now that this system is complete in itself, it points the way towards an organisation of the balance of our manhood.

Had our national registers been prepared before 1914, and had depôt arrangements been worked out for the reception of men to be called up—why then the County Associations could smoothly and rapidly have raised Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth editions of the first fourteen Territorial divisions. Also, by their depôt units they could have maintained, in a regular and discriminating manner, a flow of drafts for the whole of these divisions, as well as for all the ancillary services of the National Armies in the Field. Instead of our actual efforts in making the new K. Armies with as many mistakes, flounderings, wastages as if military forces had never before in our history been raised, the County Associations, who knew all about making, clothing, feeding and keeping troops, would have stamped out duplicates, triplicates and quadruplicates of their original quotas of Territorial troops, without too much friction or effort; they would, indeed, have turned out the fifty-six divisions we required quite comfortably.

A man hesitates to tackle a picture puzzle. He feels tired when he looks at the heap of queer-shaped, jagged oddments whose relatedness does not lie on the surface or jump to the eye. One day the spirit moves him, or his children move him, to set to work and he succeeds in fitting together part

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of the pattern. The deep-seated, the symmetrical, constructive instinct is now fairly aroused: the desire to complete the picture becomes over-powering: if, for some reason, part of the work must be undone, he is careful to leave the backbone, the clue, to the general design.

When Haldane left the War Office he left his successor with his half-finished puzzle, and all seemed shaping very nicely. The Army Council of 1913 had their six divisions of Regulars, their fourteen Territorial divisions, and had begun to feel that if they were required to expand, they could do so, in such a way as to perfect the whole; that, if they were ordered to reduce, they could do so with a minimum of damage. Suddenly arose the Irish storm, struck the good ship, War Office and, in a jiffy, overboard goes the pilot, the skipper and the navigating lieutenant. Their places are filled—nohow, anyhow. Hardly are they filled when a frightful tornado strikes lightning-like on that ill-fated barque. The whole of the trained crew, mates, engineers, stewards, tumble into a lifeboat and row for dear life and medals to the Continent. Overboard goes the new pilot; overboard goes the old pilot who is recalled and seems for a moment to handle the helm, and on to the bridge of that poor derelict vessel is thrust a Master Mariner of Eastern Seas, one who has never yet guided any ship in European waters.

All seems lost, but, to the British, all things seem possible: so great are their reserves of energy and adaptibility that they have as many lives as a cat. The fourteen Territorial Divisions are shelved; they and their Associations stand down; everyone

plays up ; the *tour de force* of replacing a fine organisation by a sheer improvisation becomes possible (owing to the breathing space guaranteed us by our Fleet) to a great national hero of resistless push.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first thing is to think ; the second thing is to write ; the third thing is to lobby. No Parliament (remember) accepts the organisation or reorganisation of anything without a long, hard struggle, for (as is too often forgotten) Parliaments are out all the time to protect vested interests.

The genius of our race does not run to "order." There is a strong tendency amongst us to sneer at the student of method, or theory, and to smile upon the man of action, the "business" man. If you hear an Englishman say A is a theorist and B a practical man, you know he would prefer B for his son-in-law. He might be wrong. But all I say here is, each one in his place, and, in Army making, first place for organisation which can put an Army in hand in the same way that in an egg you may hold in hand the sharp spurs and gallant soul of a game cock. If, when war breaks out, you have thought so little about the problem that you cannot lay your hand straightway upon fighting men—not even in embryo—then, indeed, despair. Given time, an Army may get as far as the egg state at next to no cost and without interfering in any way with the ordinary, everyday avocations of the citizens who may be ear-marked by the organiser as potential food for powder, whilst nothing is further from their thoughts.

If the Adjutant-General knows exactly who and what are required and can lay hands on "who"

and "what" the moment they are required—if methods have been thought out carefully beforehand for the armament, equipment, housing of all this raw personnel and material the moment it rolls in, why then, the Army is already on the stocks, and if you have a first line Expeditionary Force ready to go anywhere, a big Regular Sea Fleet to take it there, and a big Territorial Force Air Fleet to prevent you from being rushed, you ought, with luck, to have time enough to get that paper Army on foot.

These views will be queried by many good officers. So eager are some of my comrades for perfection that they think it practical to say they have no use for imperfection—that if they cannot get highly trained troops they would prefer to have none at all! Many things are militarily desirable, financially practicable *and* politically impossible. Messrs. Coats might as well sneer at raw cotton as an Adjutant-General turn up his nose at a bumpkin. A firm of timber merchants have hanging over their heads a contract binding them to be ready to deliver, whenever called upon, a larger number of planks than they can well afford to stock on the off-chance. Being in a quandary, they are offered a lien on the forests of the country, to become operative the moment the heavy demand is made upon them. Is it thinkable that they would quarrel with the offer: saying that trees in the rough, not even trimmed of their branches, were of no use to them? Would they, as practical men of business, reject such an option because in normal times it lay dormant? So with an Army. A well-thought-out paper organisation may seem valueless in peace time—to

the minds which the catch phrase captures. A "paper" transaction, preparation, promise, is held in very poor esteem by rascals and asses; all the same, it is the basis of progress and of civilisation, and if the name of every likely lad in the country is committed to paper and ear-marked for the class of job that best suits him, why then, one touch of the button and their services are secured. Untrained the lads may be, but, as I shall presently prove, if the machinery for training them is got ready in advance, they themselves are already half ready.

Colonel Goethals, of the United States Army, lately commanded thirty-five thousand men who, with thirty-five thousand of their dependents, were strung along the Panama Canal. The country produced nothing. Every morning these seventy thousand beings were provisioned for the day from the seaboard with their own national bill of fare, from the pick-aninny's pap to the Spaniard's *olla podrida*. Neither food nor drink of the right sort ever failed a single mother's son of the said heterogeneous seventy thousand. The medical, sanitary, supply, transport services were scientifically allotted to the groups along the line—in proper proportion. The Ordnance could make anything in their shops form a watch to a locomotive. Nothing was left to chance. All was foreseen, arranged and ordered. The workers were told off into four sections, what we in the Army would call divisions, and commanders (three of them military officers) and staffs were appointed over them so as to secure the due co-operation of these several sections in working towards the one central purpose of slicing America in two. Each section was subdivided on the military idea of

brigades, battalions and companies, under manager, deputy manager and foremen. Each commander and each staff officer had been taught to realise his own power, as well as the limitations placed upon that power, first, by the measure of his comrades' responsibilities; secondly, by the measure of his chief's responsibilities. Down through these avenues passed the central driving power of Colonel Goethals' will, reaching, nimbly as the electric spark, into the brains of the humblest black labourers on the isthmus.

Most people would agree that these groups of peaceable labourers working between Colon and Panama were the very antithesis of an Army. They wore no uniform. Few of them possessed arms. Since the Lord came down to confound the language of the world at the building of the Tower of Babel no harsher cackle of strange tongues jangling has been heard than the lingo current in and about the great Culebra Cut. The nasal drawl of the Yankee—the exasperating aspirates of the Cockney—the quick, sharp snap of French phrases—the smooth rotundity of South American patois—the gutturals of the Teuton—the vivacious chatter of the negroes—a motley jumble if ever there was one—and yet, out of this very jumble, organisation, great crystalliser, had begun her formulative work.

The rudiments of an Army were emerging from an artificial amalgam of human beings unbound by personal motive or racial sentiment. Whatever that force could accomplish, which would not have been equally well done by an equal number of day labourers, must be placed to the credit of organisation.



Suppose now, at his breakfast one day, Colonel Goethals had got a cypher cable telling him that the Venezuelan Army was advancing northwards to attack Mexico ; or, if preferred, let it be the other way on. What could he have done ? Had he organised a mere simulacrum of an Army, or, did it possess any military quality ?

Well, within one hour of his getting that message, he could have his whole force of 35,000 men digging a chain of redoubts along the heights from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean. By the next afternoon these would be wired in and would have had their approaches studded with dynamite mines cleverly connected up with central observing stations, thus furnishing any garrison that could be put into them with some shelter from rifle or gun fire, or even a bayonet charge. The workshops might, meanwhile, have fitted out each North American or British worker with a couple of hand grenades ; a certain number of rifles available would also have been issued to those who could use them, a number which, in the case of the British (before the war) had been calculated as one in every three. Next day the small force of Marines stationed near Culebra Cut would be reinforced from Key West or Guantanamo and these troops would find a pretty fair line of entrenchments ready for them to walk into. The professional, fighting Commander would appreciate what had been done, but he would also have to find grave fault with the sites chosen for the redoubts. Their field of fire, command, etc., etc., would certainly be most faulty. His censure would be justified by the facts, but undeserved as addressed to Colonel Goethals, for the organisation created by



him between Colon and Panama was purely an administrative and peace organisation. It had no special thinking department for war—no General Staff. Otherwise, the positions and profiles of all those defensive works would have been puzzled out scientifically in advance.

The labour force organised under military chiefs on the Isthmus of Panama was not an Army, but it had begun to shape that way. In its administrative services it was, in fact, an Army. Although the fighting men only existed here and there as chance individuals, still, even as it was, Colonel Goethals' force could have made short work of twice its own number of unorganised populace. Also, let it be remembered that to whatever extent this said force exhibited the characteristics of an Army (as against the mere mob who would perish miserably of hunger the second day out of Colon) it owed none of this power to military discipline, training, homogeneity, or *moral*. The disciplinary code of the Canal was notably less strict than in an English coal mine. Any black labourer could demand, any forenoon, an interview with Colonel Goethals himself, and be ushered into his presence right away, without intermediary. The rank and file were the clear negation of homogeneity. *Moral* had no place in a mere money-making engagement. And yet, so wonderful was the effect of a well-thought-out, perfectly-organised system, that, of itself, it gave a distinct touch of discipline, cohesion and *esprit de corps* to the whole motley concern.

Now let me try to show lack of organisation at work. In all her long history England had never sent forth a more splendid body of troops than those

she embarked for the Crimea in the spring-time of 1854. The rank and file were long service men drawn from a population which had not yet had its eyes picked out by the emigration agents. Nor had London or Lancashire yet gained scope and power to sweat hundreds of thousands of peasants through their grimy mills. As to the officers, they were the fine flower of our smaller country gentry—our Western Samurai. The drill, discipline and interior economy of corps were the best of their kind then existing on earth. Behind those forces stood the traditions of the Peninsula and Waterloo undimmed as yet by any intervening failure.

They landed: for a while it seemed as if the fair prognostics of the past were to be fulfilled. At the Alma the line of battle was coolly and cleverly formed and the advance under fire was, take it all in all, every whit as spirited and as determined as any of Wellington's day. At Inkerman the superior command, the intelligence department and the Staff work scarcely reached the standards of a nigger tribe, but the units, fighting as units, without cohesion or common purpose, behaved with so much initiative, gallantry and devotion that England had cause for pride. The first assault on the Redan brought with it for the first time unrelieved failure, but this was attributed to bad Staff work—very plausibly so, for the Staff work was horrible. After the second assault disguise became no longer possible; the Army was no longer the Army of Wellington. Its indomitable spirit had been broken. Charles Gordon, a good judge and a generous, says, writing home, "We should have

carried everything before us if the men had only advanced."

What had happened? The whole heart and soul of the War Office had run into spit and polish. No forethought was to be found there. On the spot G.H.Q. had failed to develop even so much initiative as to jog the minds of the British Government and remind them that, although the distance from the beaches to the front was only five miles—8,800 yards—say 10,000 paces (about the same as in the Southern theatre at the Dardanelles), yet neither flour nor blankets could fly over even that short distance. No genius imagined a metalled road; no superman had the happy thought of a railway. So the flower of the Army sank into their graves and the proud hearts of those left were broken.

Not the skill of Todleben, not the fighting qualities of the Russian soldiers, not General January or February, not pestilence, not superior armament, but just the good old British national Generalissimo, Sir Muddle T. Somehow, K.G., O.M., G.C.B., marched our poor fellows off by battalions into another and, let us hope, better organised world.

Colonel Goethals and his Commissary, Major Wilson, would have tackled that five miles line of communication, giving it precedence over everything except the actual fighting; treating it in precisely the same anxious spirit as that with which a diver examines the tube that is to bring down the vital air into his helmet. The chance of snow and rain falling in the Crimea would have struck them.

Having been educated at West Point they would have heard how winter, plus the rotten roads of Russia, had combined to cut short the careers of Charles XII of Sweden and of the Emperor Napoleon. Being organisers they would have understood right away that if a lot of men were to be employed digging trenches in very beastly weather, they must be fed and clothed at least half as well as convicts. Indeed, I will be bound, had they been sitting in a London office and had they there been shown a plan of harbour and camp, *their very first anxiety and instructions* would have been directed towards the establishment of a good and durable road between the ships and the Army in the trenches. But then, as I have said, they are organisers. We, also, had organisers amongst us in the "fifties"—for example Florence Nightingale. But the Civil or Military departments who ruined our Army in the Crimea had not even an inkling of what I am here endeavouring to explain—the part played, namely, by Organisation and her handmaiden, Administration, in the life, strength and victories of Armies.

From the Crimea to 1914-18 is a far cry and we ought to have learnt to avoid the more costly and colossal of the blunders I have described. Have we? Let each one think for himself. As for me I feel I should only weaken my argument if I opened it to the raging of contemporary controversies. But as to the future, we must be of good courage and resolve to do better—resolve next time to have the man, the men and the machines—*ready*. To do this with any degree of success we must think out

exactly, in advance, the shape and size of the machines, the framework. This point will be dealt with in the last chapters on the application of my theories to our actual Army. •

## CHAPTER VI

### DISCIPLINE

The moment organisation grips an individual it tends to produce a certain habit; the habit a part acquires of harmonising itself with the whole. In my simile of the machine the parts were held together by rivets—that is to say, by discipline. From family to Empire no association of human beings can dispense with discipline.

This is the theory; nay, more, it is the firm belief of nine men out of ten. But when it comes to practice? . . . We are all willing to serve God; but who is to interpret Him to our senses? Actually, we Anglo-Celts apply our belief in discipline to those over whom we have, in some way or another, got a pull. With infinite pains we have trained the horse to be a useful servant—tamed wolves into dogs—taught lightning to work telephones. Are they to be free? Certainly not! With infinite pains the State has educated us into civilised beings. Are we to be free? Certainly!

Those are our principles and there is a great deal to be said for them; a very great deal which can be put into four words. *The war is won.* Yes; the free Briton has beaten the social-communal German; elastic individualism has smashed the rigid organisation.

That is not to say that the British were quite uncontrolled. Clearly that would not be correct. Uncontrolled energy is like steam in a cloud up in the sky. You can't use it. If it dissolves in rain, more likely than not that rain falls on to the new-mown hay—I speak feelingly. But stick the vague thing into a machine and it works. The war has forced us to crib from the enemy; the “sort of peace” of 1921 finds us more organised, more disciplined, less in the clouds, than we were when we started; and we hate it.

Some races have worn the habit of discipline so long that it has become to them what her corsets are to a fine lady—a support. To the Anglo-Celt it presents itself rather as an enemy to freedom—an irksome restraint—a curb. Though he may long for a job, the moment discipline steps in and orders him to work, he longs rather to jib. If England has escaped reactions on the large scale against discipline since the days when the pressed crews of our Fleet mutinied, it is because voluntary service has taken the wind out of the sails of indiscipline and has, at the same time, supplied us with the most admirable amalgam, from a disciplinary standpoint, of officers possessing the prestige of good education and social status whilst the rank and file are drawn mainly from the most easily impressioned classes.

Everyday education is busy swelling young heads with self-importance. As M. Paul Bert, Gambetta's Minister of Education, said once in the Chamber of Deputies, “The spread of material prosperity, the progress even in education, render citizens more susceptible to all sorts of enjoyments and tend to

lead them towards an egotistical indifference. Further, the spread of the sentiment of individual independence, consequent upon universal suffrage and the frequent exercise of sovereign power, is by no means calculated to strengthen respect for discipline or even respect for law. The military curriculum appears to me the most potent method, I do not say to create, but to maintain the moral standard, inculcating as it does reasoned obedience and legitimate sacrifices."

All who may at one time or another have made an effort to dive beneath the surface of that information-hunt called education must realise that the penetrating mind of this Frenchman has made its way through a maze of theories and rules to the real issue. State education and the exercise of civil rights do lead straight to selfishness, and the first task of any Military Officer in dealing with young civilians is to try and knock the "Is" out of the egoist.

Two classes of our community form an exception to the undisciplined majority. By acting as a species of reservoir of order they have done much to counteract the disruptive tendencies of competitive examinations and all similar exercises in the gentle art of fratricide.

Miners and seafaring folk possess a very sound code of discipline of their own which manifests itself in a habit of orderly, cool obedience to recognised authority, well suited to those Saxon foundations upon which the British temperament is built.

The behaviour of British miners when things go wrong underground has been very favourably compared by unprejudiced experts with the conduct of



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the miners of other nations under a similar trial. No rushing—no cries—no accusations, against the company. If such ideas arise they are kept for next day. There is no class in the country of whom we should be so proud as our miners, and that mainly because of their discipline. How do they get it? By the organisation which at the same time classifies and unites; by appreciation, brought home to them individually several times in the week, of the superior knowledge and experience of their managers and foremen; by comprehension of the common, ever-present menace from the lurking forces of nature and of the fact that union is strength.

Parenthetically, I may here remark that I am trying to consider my subject in a detached and philosophical spirit. The very discipline and solidarity of the miners is now being used, in the opinion of some people, to get more than their due share of the national income. All I mean to say here is, that I am not entering into these matters; that they must not arrest my argument; that they do not affect its truth.

Organisation, as I began by saying, in itself produces discipline, and although miners may be organised on the large scale and fishermen on the small scale, yet, as a nation, we are, as I have shown, consciously unorganised. Colonel Ardant du Picq says, "Organisation and discipline work towards the same end, and often the former, if it is rational, amongst people with a good conceit of themselves like the French, and possessing French sociability, will reach the goal without its being necessary to apply the coercive methods of the second." A law

ordering a man to serve in a certain contingency—asserting the right of the State, that is to say, to make him do something he may not like—contains in it a germ of discipline even if it is never applied. Yet more unmistakably is this disciplinary effect produced when organisation quits paper and takes the field.

In 1885, during what was called the Pendjeh scare, Mr. Gladstone was above all things anxious to distract the attention of the public from the death of Gordon and from the Quixotic idea that we should go up to Khartoum to show that national heroes should not be speared. So, in a species of cold frenzy (clever political scheming masked as burning sympathy for Central Asian scoundrels), the drum was beat, the bugle was blown, and certain categories of the Army Reserve were summoned to the Colours.

Now this was the first time the reserves had ever been called out: indeed, until the 'eighties, there had never been any reserves to call. Perhaps then belief that the men would actually put in an appearance was not so implicit as was pretended. Certainly the arrangements made for their reception were altogether inadequate. But the men did turn up in full force; there was no sufficient organisation ready to take them in hand, and it will be in the memory of many that there was a good deal of indiscipline and crime.

In 1899 the reserves were again called out, but this time the organisation was ready for them. They were met at the railway stations; taken off to the depôt with the band playing at their head; clothed; equipped and given a hot meal, before they could

ejaculate "Jack Robinson." No one—not even the bitterest of our critics—has ever said one word against the conduct of those men either before they embarked, on their voyages, during the war or after they came home. Bad organisation had bred bad discipline in 1885 and good organisation had bred good discipline in 1899. As to 1914—it can only be said that the first hundred thousand were deliberately deprived of the organisation made ready by Haldane for their reception and that their survivors know better than most what lack of organisation means in breeding discomfort; disease; inefficiency. If they triumphed over these miseries—unnecessary miseries—it was because of a red-hot enthusiasm, which rivers of cold water and acres of mud were entirely unable to damp. But these men do know what a heart-breaker muddle can be, and they will understand as Britons would not have understood ten years ago how the entire lack of organisation manifested by the French mobilisation of 1870 must have lessened the discipline of the reservists by a percentage equivalent to an Army Corps.

"Military" discipline—Wellington's stand-by—Napoleon's sheet anchor (not his propeller)—subjects the minds and bodies of organised men to a special course of instruction, part moral, part physical. Up to the end of the nineteenth century discipline took the form of bodily exercises and appealed more to the physical and instinctive than to the spiritual and intellectual. This type of discipline was inculcated by curses, blows and punishments so that only the lower range of moral qualities—pride, shame, fear, and habit—were played upon. The

## DISCIPLINE

monotonous character of the drill, whereat, year after year, Command played with obedience and crushed initiative, excluded independence of thought—and was so intended. The martinet aimed at getting control of the instinct; about the reason he did not care.

In its results that old rigid discipline took the form of a mechanical, subconscious obedience to the percussive shout of the commander; a bark-like sound violently ejected, propelling lines or columns of men against one another with almost as little volition on the part of the individual as is felt by a projectile dispatched from the mouth of a cannon. Or, the obedience was passive but equally divorced from the ordinary emotions and inclinations of humanity. "Stand there till you are relieved; happen what may; lava belching forth from the mountain, the tide pouring in from the sea, a city rising in its wrath, the entreaties of the girl you love, the orders of your own Emperor; sentry—stand there!"

Where action was by shock of soldiers marching shoulder to shoulder, the more mechanical the movement the more irresistible the effect. Men's bodies respond to instinct more effectively than to will. The quickest, the handiest steersman and poleman going up the Nile to the relief of Charles Gordon were those who could neither read nor write. An involuntary sneeze is more explosive and violent than a voluntary blowing of the nose. A hand inadvertently touching a hot iron is jerked back more quickly than the same human being can move it by his will.

Therefore, the first great object of Commanders,

from Frederick the Great's time to the Revolution, was to have their men half-hypnotised by habit so that the Mesmerist (the Commander) could fling them, as cohesively, as unthinkingly, as if they had been a salvo of cannon-balls, straight upon the bayonets of the enemy. Generals did not so much aspire to direct and to control the intellects of their soldiers as to manipulate their limbs without any disconcerting interposition by the intellects of the victims.

To this end the rank and file were removed as far as possible from the influences of family life. They were not encouraged to be either moral or, in the larger sense, patriotic. A fanatical loyalty to the person of the Reigning Sovereign and an intensely sectarian *esprit de corps* were the nearest they were allowed to approach to elevating motives. Who, precisely, invented this character mould it is impossible now to discover. The process was in full action when I myself joined the Army and it still survives, an anachronism, but a lucky one for Authority. When the lesson had been mastered by the soldiers they passed muster and, in course of time, when they had been mastered by the lesson, then, at last, a brutal routine had created a machine which would trample down the noblest enthusiasm. A thousand men standing up in the open with arms in hand, each anxious to fight himself but each uncertain of how far his fellows meant to fight, were liable to be scattered like chaff by a mere handful of soldiers hypnotised by habit into responding as one individual to the orders of their sergeant. Although based on the ignoble idea of making men dread their captain more than the enemy, more

than the Devil himself<sup>1</sup>; although founded on the illogical principle of obtaining bravery by teaching terror; the incidental results of that old, iron discipline were in many respects admirable.

Discipline waged constant war against dirt, irregularity and slackness. Discipline could turn to good account not only the willing and keen but also the dull and apathetic, curbing these, spurring those. Good discipline was proof against panic. I have seen one isolated company of a well-disciplined regiment stand to their arms and hold their ground steady as a rock when, crying out with terror, hundreds of men suddenly startled from their sleep and imagining that the dervishes were upon them, rushed past them down to the boats. The instinct of the organism was so cultivated that the common men in the ranks were able to override the weakness and cowardice of humanity. By inculcating implicit, abject obedience; by inspiring each man with confidence that he would not be left in the lurch; discipline gave the mass ten times the weight of the aggregate of its atoms. Napoleon has told us how two Mameluks would beat three French soldiers, but that one thousand French soldiers would beat one thousand five hundred Mameluks. Yet the Mameluks had some tincture of discipline; they were accustomed to fight together. Indeed discipline has seemed to some capable even of creating qualities; or, if this is considered impossible, it can at least develop out of all recognition qualities latent

<sup>1</sup> "It was an inflexible maxim of Roman discipline that a good soldier should dread his own officers far more than the enemy."—Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chap. I.

until it touched them. But its penalties were cruel; its methods damaging to initiative and self-respect.

A well-known example:

During the Silesian Campaign, Frederick the Great was going the rounds of his camp after "lights out." Observing the glimmer of a taper coming from a tent he entered and found Captain Zieten engaged in sealing up a letter. The culprit fell on his knees and begged for forgiveness. "Take a seat," said Frederick, "and add a few words to what you have already written." Captain Zieten obeyed, and wrote at the dictation of the hero of Prussian history, "To-morrow I die on the scaffold." Next day he was duly executed, in the interests of discipline, and also no doubt that the *bon mot* of the monarch might be underlined in red.<sup>1</sup>

The method of Frederick the Great had been Cæsar's and Alexander's before him and, long before those heroes took the field, Sun Tzu, the Chinaman, had shown them the way.

By this type of discipline the backbone of the British Army was fortified (and mortified) from the time it was first raised until the year 1881. In 1857, 112 of our soldiers had the privilege of dividing between them a total of 5,249 lashes. Looking over returns of admissions to hospitals in the Mediterranean garrisons I came across the following tit-bits. At Malta in 1863 there were twenty-two admissions to hospital as the result of corporal punishment.

<sup>1</sup> The irony is not levelled at the penalty. Where disobedience or carelessness may sacrifice the lives or liberty of perhaps 20,000 comrades, they become great crimes. But the occasion did not lend itself happily to epigram.



At Gibraltar in the same year, 1863, there were twenty-nine admissions to hospital as a result of corporal punishment. Although the actual floggings were done away with amidst the threats and head shakings of the martinets, the theories of Sun Tzu and Co. remained on the code until the last year of last century.

Of all the rich windfalls garnered by Greater Britain from the South African War one of the best was her new Discipline. Lessons learnt amongst the nullahs and jungle during the Tirah Campaign of 1896-1897 against the Afridis had prepared our minds for the change, and the fresh experiences of kopje and veldt soon convinced our officers that, in open country and during daylight, the ancient, mechanical discipline of the intensive, iron type simply could not be applied to the new tactics. Armament, necessitating (as it seemed then) wide extensions, isolated the individual. Neither by voice nor revolver could the captain of the opening year of this century dominate a firing line extended at five to ten paces interval through the uproar and confusion of the battle.

*We have come to the last little bit of safe cover for close formations. The scouts have reported on the ground lying open to our front. The captain makes up his mind to break cover, open out and rush. The order is given. Desperately the human souls dart forward—flights of bullets whistling past their ears; shrapnel cracking in the air above their heads—each bent double, going all he knows. Many fall by the way, some dead, some wounded, some shamming. But our one little bit of humanity is a chip from some old Norman or Viking block. He gets there—drops*



*in the heaven of shelter behind a rock—and finds himself alone. He is safe—for the moment! The bullets go on pouring through the air—did he put his cap on the end of his rifle and hold it up it would soon be as full of holes as a pepper castor. But—so long as he keeps his head down he is safe. No captain or subaltern, not even a sergeant or corporal, to give him an order—and, if they did give him an order, how could he hear it?*

In that position, any man trained to depend so implicitly on orders that his independent ideas have degenerated into instincts—the man whose bravery consists in terror of his officer—is at liberty to sit tight, and does so; for he never gets the kick of his accustomed word of command.

The magazine rifle with its low trajectory and smokeless powder, spoke volumes to the captain of 1899–1902. It told him he could still conduct his company into the zone of aimed fire, but that, having got them there, he must either—

(1) Keep his direct command at the cost of double losses.

(2) Let each little group understand the common objective. Then leave them to the promptings of their own consciences of what was right rather than to the dread of doing wrong.

Since the South African War trench warfare has come into being and its bearing upon military ethics will be discussed later on. But it may be stated here that although from the material and practical standpoints it has given breathing space and renewed possibilities to (1), yet in our Army we have never since South Africa looked back or ceased to strive for the principle exemplified in (2).

Now what, under that principle, happens to our lonely soldier, aged twenty, lying in momentary precarious shelter from the ceaseless attempts of terrible people called the enemy to deprive him of his life? If discipline has become a matter of conscience he will still, though he can only see one or two of his comrades and speak to none, *feel himself surrounded and upheld by those comrades*. Abstract ideas of duty and patriotism do not help a young man in such a tight corner—not much. Fear will not help him—not at all. The self-disciplined mind; the proud superhuman feeling; “These bullets and shells won’t stop me!” The knowledge—the conviction—that the captain means to rush forward again upon these cursed foreigners and that the company will follow him to a man: there is his loadstar of conduct.

So it comes that the balance point of discipline has, at least in the British Army, insensibly shifted during the past twenty years. Soldiers of all ranks are being taught the reason why orders must be obeyed; why an unwise command wisely and unanimously carried out will carry further than a wise order hesitatingly executed; why individuals must stoop if they wish the nation to conquer. Force of habit of mind has replaced force of habit of body. The momentum of the opinion of comrades has been enlisted on the side of duty, and although punishment cannot be altogether dispensed with as a factor, yet our officers have decided to seek discipline for the future more largely in the domain of respect than of fear; in the effect of good example; in the upholding of a high level of camaraderie; in being wiser, better men themselves and thus

deserving, *earning* the confidence of their subordinates; in the intelligent comprehension by the rank and file of the why and wherefore of an order and in their keenness to carry it out; above all, in the gradual conversion of their subordinates to the belief that self-assertion plays no part in their scheme of creating discipline: that they, the officers, are just merely so many humble servants of the State, but that, whenever they issue an order, they voice the will of the nation.

Once more, there are two sorts of discipline, distinct in principle although sometimes they may overlap in practice.

The one is born in coercion and sets the soldier outside the ring of homely sentiment which surrounds the ordinary citizen from his cradle to his grave. On parade the Prussian martinet wished to stop the men's breathing because it made the points of their bayonets tremble: off parade these same martinets try to control the heart's beats. This type of discipline isolates the soldier in barracks: prevents him from marrying: gives him pride of caste: teaches him to think of the rest of his countrymen as civilians: places the honour of the corps above personal ambition or politics: detaches his generous enthusiasms from himself and his fellows to pin them securely on to the regimental colours. All through it is a narrowing, but it is also an intensive, process. When someone is shooting at him round the corner, the average man is not endowed with either the wealth of imagination or force of energy wherewith to grasp a great Empire in his purview. Coercive as the old discipline may be, it by no means despises the moral factor. It tries

to make a religion of something very near and real, yet, at the same time, high, intangible, romantic—the Regiment! Under Frederick William I, the Sergeant-King, this science attained its highest refinement, for he, the said William, went so far as to breed his own Grenadiers. Since Napoleon's day the tendencies, whether of society or armament, or organisation, have been against it: yet, certainly it would be too much to say that any Army can dispense with it entirely.

The other sort of discipline aims at raising the work-a-day virtues of the average citizen to a higher power. It depends:

- (1) Upon a sense of duty (*res publica*).
- (2) Upon generous emulation (force of example).
- (3) Upon military cohesion (*esprit de corps*).
- (4) Upon the fear a soldier has of his own conscience (fear that he may be afraid).

Therefore, the modern discipline possesses the merit of being practically a continuation class of that patriotism which is, in a sound and healthy body politic, being constantly taught by mothers and in the schools. Had our British scheme of State Education been framed by idealists, instead of by materialists, there would be no break in the moral training, no friction or loss of time in teaching a new mechanical trick of implicit obedience when a lad joined the Army. For once a corps is animated through all its members by a wish to act towards the same end: and once they have realised that their officer is best qualified to show them how to achieve that end: then, as regards that act the corps are already disciplined. All they need now is *time* wherein to let this reliance upon their officers

and their comrades develop into a *habit of mind*: habit being the instinctive refuge of every one in trouble. Had we only universal Boy-Scouts Service, follow-my-leader and shoulder-to-shoulder would have quite a familiar ring to the young recruit. The Centurion has to be the better man, and he has to prove himself so to his legionaries every single time that an occasion happens to arise. This is the idea in a nutshell and it is a good idea.

From a moral standpoint there is no question as to which of these two disciplines is the finer,—and I have already shown that, from an infantry standpoint also, the new discipline fits in with the conditions of the modern battlefield better than the old. But the tactical bearing of discipline differs in the several branches of our military service, and I will try to make clear my meaning by giving an example.

The hands of the Officers of the Royal Navy and Royal Artillery have not been forced, as have those of the Officers of the Infantry, by the tactical necessity for very wide extensions. With them the principles of tactics remain constant: only the mechanical conditions have altered. In a battleship all hands are still concentrated under authority, and through his telephone the voice of the actual commander dominates every hole and cranny even more completely than was possible in the days of Nelson. Gun detachments also, in the field, work in as close order and are as much under the officer's control as ever they were. The soldier of the line has a different set of problems to solve from the sailor or gunner. Whenever he gets away from the ken of his officer, i.e., whenever he comes under heavy aimed fire or is sent out as a scout, he has to act on his own

initiative and use his own judgment as to what he ought to do. But a seaman or artilleryman is told what he is to do; he has to use his wits, not as to *what* he ought to do, but as to *how* a specified job is to be done. A private of the line, aged twenty, may be on patrol and may have to decide for himself whether to advance; stand fast; fall back; remain concealed or shoot. All sorts of alternatives open out before him in one second and on his decision may depend the fate of an Empire. A seaman ensconced in the bowels of a ship gets a message to send up a common shell. The hoists are jammed. He has got to get the shell up somehow. He knows what to do, but he may have to use ingenuity in doing it.

The bluejacket has more responsibility than he used to have, and discipline is maintained more by love of the Service, pride of ship and emulation of crew than it used to be. But the very fact that in the Navy and Royal Artillery an officer is always close at hand in peace, and will be close at hand in war must, and does, affect the temper and tone of the discipline. If my readers want to know how—I can only say this, that its aim is not so lofty, but that a low trajectory is more likely than a high trajectory to hit the mark.

Just as, with us, the Navy and Royal Artillery remain nearest the old type of discipline, so the Royal Engineers have got further than any other corps in trying to work out their salvation by the new type. No more interesting study in the science of discipline than to watch parties of bluejackets and sappers working side by side building bridges for the embarkation of big guns. The one Service

(popularly supposed to be so free, easy and go-as-you-please) under the strictest control and supervision. The other, pipes in mouth, laughing, talking, but all the time putting their backs well into their work and responding like one man to the occasional orders of their officer. These are no odious comparisons ; both services are, to my thinking, equally admirable ; they are examples illustrating the elasticity of discipline.

Some further illustrations, drawn this time from abroad. Cultivated in the hothouse atmosphere of very short, very arduous service, Continental units grow up symmetrical, pleasing to the eye, and as like as two peas—superficially ! Take them out for a campaign in the open ; expose them to heat, drought, tempests ; it will be found that their tap roots strike down into two essentially different strata for their discipline.

Continental Armies are modelled either on the French or upon the Prussian system. In the spring of 1914 there was no longer any fundamental cleavage between the two systems as regards organisation, training or patriotism. There were divergencies, hotly debated divergencies, especially as to tactical methods, but each Army employed numerous officers who believed rather in the theories of the other Army than in their own.

The radical difference between the French and the Prussian systems did not show up in peace. The roots of a tree are hidden from the casual observer and in calm weather a deep or a wide spread root seems to serve their purposes equally well. But the difference was there and it lay in the sharply contrasting *temperaments* of the two



nations. Before the Boer bullets had knocked new ideas into our British skulls the French had begun to depend, perhaps too confidently, upon the new discipline, the discipline of camaraderie; respect and self-respect. Not so the Prussians; not even to-day when they attribute more than ever the great fight put up by their Army against the World to its old world discipline, the discipline of coercion.

When I see the queer mistakes made by eminent Continental writers about our little Army, I realise how hard it is to put oneself into a foreigner's shoes. The absurd errors these authors have often committed are warnings to Britishers to be careful.

So I will explain my claims to have any opinions at all. At the impressionable age of 17-18, I spent a year—the year<sup>1</sup>—in Saxony amidst a purely military society. Visits were made by me during that time to the French prisoners, to whom (under a less ferocious aspect of war than that of to-day) I was allowed to make little presents, when, naturally, I seized the opportunity of hearing as much as I could of their adventures and battles. Later on, I went through three manœuvres with German troops, including a precious three weeks in Saxony when, very generously, I was allowed the privileges of a Divisional Staff Officer. A year was spent by me in intimate contact with the Army of Japan, and from April, 1904 to the middle of next February I was on active service in the field. In 1903 I was privileged by the kindness of Mr. Roosevelt to inspect a number of regular U.S.A. units and to see manœuvres with the State Militia in the Middle West. In 1906, I took part in the Teschen manœuvres with the

<sup>1</sup> 1870-71.



Austrian Army (Bosnian, Hungarian, Polish, Czech and German troops). Two years later I saw the partial mobilisation for war of Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia and Turkey. Finally, I have made three visits to Russia seeing divisional and Army manoeuvres. During these many visits, every chance was seized of seeing the company or battalion training. Later on, at the Dardanelles, two French divisions served under my command. So much experience should surely afford some foundation, I do not say for comprehension, but certainly for that sort of impression which is left by long and close contact with any foreign body. That, at least, is my claim and my excuse.

Abroad the Army is the nation. In each company Socialists, pacifists, men who have no stomach for a fight (every nation has them), elbow lawyers, artists, swells, clodhoppers and the very highest martial types. Some of these must often, in the nature of the case, be cleverer than their own officers. Few of them stand there of their own free will.

THE FRENCH TYPE OF ARMY.—To achieve leadership by sheer weight of personality over the crowd of cannon-fodder I have sketched is a tall order, for the time is short—one, two, or at the most three years. These free-thinking French rank and file cannot, in so short a service, lose their heads and be re-equipped with don't-think-but-do-as-you-are-told minds. Nothing would be more wholesome to the Gallic constitution than a good strong dose of "don't think," but the short-service conscript Army is an epitome of the nation and the very least that would serve to break it clean off from

its matrix is seven years of service with the Colours.

The *sine qua non* to real success in France (as in Australia and New Zealand) is that the officer should be conspicuous by his character, his personal disinterestedness, his zeal, devotion and technical knowledge. I speak here mainly of peace training: in wartime a shining and distinctive courage will cover many other shortcomings, and this is so well understood that I have known very senior officers play up to the gallery by swank effects; by pitching their camp in the middle of a hot corner; by climbing as if unconcernedly out of the trenches.

Put in another way this means that the officer must be the salt of the nation—chosen from the nation, without favour or affection, on his personal merits. In France (with which I again in this connection bracket Australia and New Zealand) it gives a man no pull over his troops to be wealthy or to be an aristocrat—rather the contrary. There is nothing left then for the officer to fall back upon but his own sheer self. Now, in these armies very many officers are promoted from the ranks under the impression that, somehow, this is a democratic proceeding. But, if a nation wants to get the best, why in the name of fortune limit the field of choice? To give their own system a fair chance the least they can do is to be truly democratic and choose their officers from the whole of the nation, not from that section of the nation called the Army. The democratising of an Army does not mean handing over its conduct to a Soviet, to a body without experience of the world or of its manners and customs. The long and the short of it is this—the new style of discipline works splendidly where

the officers are exceptional men; where the rank and file are amenable, young, patriotic. But where the officer is mediocre and where the reservists come back to the Colours animated by a critical or hostile spirit, then the new discipline, left to its own resources, discloses some ugly fissures: then the Commander begins to look over his shoulder to the old days and to wish he had at his back a little of the old coercive prestige. The new discipline is the only possible discipline for the truly democratic peoples, but at present it leaves too much upon good will—*bonne volonté*—and upon the myth that men are brave naturally and that all will do their best.

THE GERMAN TYPE OF ARMY.—Whereas, in France, the corps of officers are just as mixed as their men, and whereas they are thus debarred by birth, so to say, from posing as rigid, superior inaccessible beings, the Prussian officer may be said to be born in spurs and a helmet. Being so "born" (*geboren*: the word is so vital and so incessantly used in the German system that it is usually abbreviated "*geb*")—being once so "born," I say, he has won half his life's battle in advance and the nation he springs from is quite ready to accept him as a leader if only he will work twelve hours a day and despise profiteers, both of which he does. The people have a *penchant* for discipline: they have feudalised for so many hundred years that they have developed a taste for it: the officer who would establish sincere human relations with them will not be met half-way; the rank and file feeling more comfortable when treated in the good old *de haut en bas* style. The officer corps in Prussia,

Bavaria, Saxony, Austria, the countries I knew best, constituted a veritable caste apart. By that fact alone their disciplinary problem became totally different from the problems of France, Australia and New Zealand where, as I have said, the officers have to rely very largely upon good-will which may not always be on tap. The Prussians make no mistake here: they believe in men doing what they are told to do and no why or wherefore. Not that they ignore changed conditions, as the following reminiscence will show. On my way back from the Russian Manœuvres, on the 30th August, 1909, at Berlin, I put on my uniform and went to call upon General von Moltke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff; I had not seen him to talk to since the Frankfurt-on-Oder Manœuvres in September, 1902, when the question of his being brainy enough to succeed to the Command of the Guards Division was hanging by a hair. His Excellency was a kindly giant and had no enemies; these were his prime qualifications: in other respects he was as far removed from the genus General Staff as he was from the genius of his great namesake.

• Amongst other interesting subjects (including my own summing up of the training of my own troops on Salisbury Plain, dated 27th October, 1908, which he had by him, reprinted in German) we discussed the twentieth-century discipline and the colossal difficulties of running obedience to superiors and independence of character in double harness. At the end of our conversation he said he would send me out by motor to look at some company inspections. I gladly accepted.

Whether by design or by accident, I struck on

as well-marked an instance of the new discipline as anyone could desire.

About a dozen miles out of Berlin we came to a big fir-wood and were guided through the trees to where a company of the Queen Augusta Regiment were grouped about their piled arms. I was introduced to the Captain who, though he must have felt it outrageous to be pestered by a foreigner at a moment of so great a tension, had the self-control to seem pleased to meet me. The signallers now reported the approach of the redoubtable Regimental Commander and the Captain fell in his Company. Having done so, he proceeded to address them in a very friendly way, and something to the following effect: "So now, my lads, we are about to be examined. What I want you to remember all the time is that you have got to keep cool and not lose your heads. I ask this of you not only for your own sakes and for my sake, but for a much higher thing, the honour of the Company. Please, boys, don't go and forget all the infinite pains I have taken with your education; for my part, I promise you I will give every order feeling sure each one of you is not only going to carry it out to the letter but is going to go one better if he can."

The response was enthusiastic. The Regimental Commander duly appeared and was heavily defeated. The Company was Colonel-proof and would have been equally fire-proof had war been declared that moment.

The experience was the exception which makes the rule. No doubt, there is a sincere wish on the part of the more thoughtful of the Prussian Officer class to get into human touch with their men, but

compulsory lessons are not the best jumping-off ground for that purpose, and the task is doubly difficult. I always remember the Japanese soldier who outraged the senses of patriotism and duty in his superior officer by saying, "In Osaka I would get five yen for digging this gun pit; here I only get criticism." When people lightly speak of an aristocratic caste breaking through century-old barriers and gaining, instead of the old-fashioned respect and fear, the affection and confidence of their men, they are only visualising one side of the equation. They forget that the men also are "born" with the hierarchic stamp of mind—the Briton must keep these facts in the foreground, or he will become unfair to the Junkers. If the officer feels it *infra dig.* to step down, neither is it the "place" of the N.C.O. or man to step up. Another obstacle to the development of that "off duty" spirit which pervades all ranks of our British voluntary services is that there is no "off duty" in the German Army. The mass of technical work to be got through is in itself an almost insurmountable barrier to social intercourse. Every year the Company officers are given a huge batch of recruits to turn into trained soldiers by next manoeuvres. The time may be just sufficient to impart the actual training; it leaves no margin for amenities; in fact, training is one thing; camaraderie, as well as discipline, are other things. A perplexing number of personalities of all grades of intellect—ranging from perfectly illiterate Poles who speak no German to the still more troublesome Socialists who speak too much German—have been caught by the meshes of universal service and have been handed over

to the Regiment as captives. A certain effect has to be produced at the inspection of the Company. The captain, therefore, sets to work feverishly in much the same spirit as a writer who has promised his publisher to deliver a biography within a year begins to unpack and re-arrange portmanteaux full of the bills and old love-letters of the defunct. How is the author going to cope with the sheer mechanical side of his job—in the time: how is the captain to make a real, lasting moral impression by his own personality—in the time? Quite apart from the conventions of feudalism he has not leisure, as in our Army, to play football and cricket with the young soldiers and teach them good temper, “give and take” and the sporting side of life—in his shirt sleeves. So, in four out of five cases, he falls back on the letter of the law; on rule of thumb interpretations thereof: on parades and on field training. In the course of his work he may incidentally gain affection as he generally establishes respect. But when all is said and done, I am sure I am right in saying that in the very large majority of cases a continental soldier belonging to the Prussian type of Army passes to the reserve regarding his officer as nothing more or less than a particularly glorified and awe-inspiring Sergeant-Major. This sort of awe may make a man spring to attention at the clank of a sword on the barrack square; it may keep a grip upon him in the trenches; it will not help him much in the open field.

I remember a magnificently drilled and disciplined British battalion. The non-commissioned officers and men were the smartest in Asia. By their very gait, by the way they held themselves,



by their salutes, you could distinguish its soldiers from any others a quarter of a mile away. But the Brigade went on an expedition. The pressure could not be kept up: slackened—everything went to pieces. The best in barracks became the worst in war. The discipline had been of too intensive a type. The peg upon which the habit had been hung was fear; fear of one man, as it happened; and that peg had snapped. In no sense spontaneous; on the march, in column, it might serve—it did not survive a few skirmishes over ground where the dominating eye could not follow. Now had that one man who dominated the battalion been able to jam them into a trench he could have maintained his discipline with the best of them, but I am speaking of the Black Mountain when extensions were at least five paces.

The trench! There we find the main factor which enabled the Prussian discipline to stand firm for years against the most tremendous all-round hammering. The reason is simply tactical and, probably, non-recurrent. Trench warfare favoured the system which was based on the baser elements of human nature. The first battle of Ypres was the last occasion when men in those open formations which give individualism and the new discipline fair play met the close-order formations which are so necessary if direct control is to be given to the captains and to their old "by order" discipline. The results are historical. From that time onwards, both sides went underground, and underground men can still be held together under the eye, tongue and auto-pistol of the captain, whereas the individuality, which had been three-quarters of the battle



in the wide extensions of a war of movement, was now wrapped up in a napkin. But trench warfare is already dead. The tank and aeroplane are inaugurating an era of economic strategy which was demanded indeed by the situation during the last war, but was demanded, alas, in vain. Next war, machines will no longer be denied, and wide encircling movements, followed by distant battles fought between comparatively small forces, will be the order of the world to come. No longer will the British Fleet sit like a hooded falcon upon Britannia's wrist. The old days will be revived and the coast line of the enemy, wherever it may be, Black Sea, Yellow Sea, Red Sea, will be our frontier. These ideas pertain properly to the chapter on training: I only refer to them here to show that, movement and distance being prime factors, the encouragement of initiative, i.e. of the new discipline, is more than ever essential. Trench warfare, in fact, gave Frederick the Great his last chance, and we must not allow ourselves to be misled by the very good use *der alte Fritz* made of it to believe in it as a living force for the future.

The upshot of the whole matter is this: under a system of Universal Service it is difficult for the officers of the French type of army to gain sufficient coercive hold over troublesome men, whereas for the officers of the Prussian type of army it is difficult to secure the close human touch demanded by the new discipline. The different degrees and levels in the intellects, characters and social status of the men, the national temperaments and the shortness of the time, are causes constantly at work to prevent either type of army availing itself to the

full of all available resources wherewith to build up discipline.

THE BRITISH TYPE OF ARMY.—Tirah and South Africa taught us their lessons, Manchuria put her seal upon them. The first of these campaigns was wireless and trenchless; the second used up all the barbed wire and all the horses in the world, and guns of position came into the field; but, the trench and the horse fitted badly together and spadework was rather the exception; the third employed trenches, barbed wire, machine-guns and big guns more and more with each successive battle from the Yalu to Mukden. Still, even up to the end, they had not quite paralysed movement or put the stopper upon wide extensions. Up to the end, extensions of attacking infantry, though never on the South African scale, were tending to increase in their width. One after another of these wars of swift movement and wide extensions came to teach us that we must recast discipline; that we must manage so as to make our discipline carry on although personal touch with the officer had been temporarily lost. Fear of the officer, we had to recognise, could no longer be the main motive of an attack, unless indeed close formations were to be adhered to and human lives be looked upon as trifles. Obstinate we shut our eyes to the trench which yawned at us more and more widely from the fields of each successive battle; the trench which was going to grant a fresh lease to the old "by order" system. No one is more to blame than I. I saw those trenches with my own eyes, and yet—I might just as well have been blind. Before the Royal Commission on the South

African War, I was the only witness who urged that masses of guns of position should accompany our infantry into the field. Whilst the Battle of Liao Yang was actually raging, I sent home a dispatch saying the only thing the cavalry could do in face of machine-guns was to cook rice for their own infantry and in a set phrase announced the death of shock cavalry for purposes of European war. I relate these perceptions as pleas in mitigation for not grasping with my mind what the revival of the entrenchments of Queen Anne's reign might mean, and how they must affect discipline, tactics, everything. That is the sort of experience which makes a man ask himself, "Am I not perhaps to-day again staring at tanks, aeroplanes, seaplanes and not seeing them?" Anyway, the trench system did develop into a monstrous retrogression in war, and thrice fortunate was it for the British Army that it had, whilst throwing itself unreservedly into the new discipline, retained almost as firm a grip upon the essentials of the old discipline as those central European Powers who had held on to it all the time. For, although we aim now at enlisting discipline, "the main force of armies," less by constraint than by consent, the unique conditions of our society and of our service automatically exalt the authority of the officer and render his two-fold task easier than that of his continental comrades.

The Army with us is not the nation—nothing resembling it. During the war it became so, but already that phase has passed completely except for a diminishing proportion of officers who have risen from the ranks. The youths now at Woolwich

and Sandhurst are practically identical in type with their predecessors who worked there in 1913 and did so well during the war. In the ranks are few of those men of Belial known as sea-lawyers; and certainly no pacifists nor C.O.'s. Gunners, drivers and men of the line come from poor but honest parents, so it should be easy as shelling peas for an officer who has had a much better start in life to become guide and philosopher to his young friends. Half our Army serves abroad where the rank and file are withdrawn from association with tub-thumpers, flappers and other similar distractions. Then, again, we have seven to eight years' service and ten per cent of these men (veterans, according to continental standards) may go on to complete twenty-one years with the Colours. Thus, automatically, our Army remains brimful of *esprit de corps*. This spirit is not, as used to be the case in Germany, brewed by the State. Clerks in the War Office used to be always on the nibble at any speciality in custom or dress upon which corps took a particular pride. Nor, in posting to corps, did the Military Secretary treat ancestors very nicely. On the contrary three generations in a regiment count for less in the eyes of our Army Council than three miserable marks in a miserable competitive exam. Still, the spirit is brewed and flows in, so to say, on its own. Officers as well as men manage to get back into the old corps in which served their fathers and grandfathers. Units have their own private gala days; uniforms and colours blossom out with roses again on each 1st of August in memory of the battle amongst the roses at Minden in 1759;

badges are fixed to the back of the helmet to commemorate 1801, when cavalry were beaten off by the rear rank facing "about" instead of forming square; mourning lace is worn by the corps which took part in the burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna or of Wolfe at Quebec. In fact, in any and every possible way, tradition puts its marks upon something of which helmets, lace and nicknames are only the outward and visible signs. One way or another the roots of tradition strike down deep. The soldier feels the regiment solid about him. The Regiment! It is impossible for the foreigner to realise what that word means to a British soldier. The splendour—the greatness—the romance of this awe-inspiring, wonderful creation in which he himself is privileged to have his being! At the end of five years' reserve service the Highlander (I speak of what I know best) belongs more to the old corps than he did when he was serving with it: forty years later he has become still more enthusiastic; he will travel a hundred miles for the pleasure of meeting one of his old officers.

In the autumn of 1884, my company took their seats in eleven small row-boats to struggle hundreds of miles up the Nile and save Charles Gordon: a vague and typically British adventure—just like a fairy tale. We carried with us food for 110 days: white lead, tacks, sheet tin and tow were stowed for repairs; 200 rounds per rifle were in reserve. Our feelings were nearly as possible those of a party of Boy Scouts dressed up like Red Indians and let loose in a flotilla of canoes. Each boat of eight rowers, a poleman and a coxswain was—and had to be—a self-supporting, independent unit.

At the best, the company got together about once in ten days, when the negotiation of a cataract called for combined effort on the drag ropes or for a portage of stores. If a boat failed to put in an appearance at the rendezvous, the captain had to unload his own boat, and thus lightened row back down the river to find the lame duck and help it along. The tale has the ring of a glorious adventure, and so it was, only, at the time, incessant toil; much of it waist deep in water, bad food, broken nights, the lack of any drink but sand and water; the resultant scurvy; all these wore health and nerves to fiddle-strings. Never in their whole lives had the men worked so hard. The very thought of the work would make a Labour Union strike! Yet, there was no crime, no stinting of effort, no grumbling; no, not even if after spending two days struggling inch by inch painfully up a cataract boats had to be sent flying down again to the rescue of wrecked companions.

Part of the preserves loaded into each boat were taboo; delicacies, not to be looked at, much less touched until we got into the zone of the actual fighting. Australian boiled mutton, cheese, jam and such-like wonderful baits to a poor man with a sweet tooth: cases, also, labelled hospital comforts which contained—it was an open secret—two bottles of port wine. All these were forbidden fruit, although we had to handle them continually, but we were encouraged in continence by an order emanating from Headquarters to say that when we got to Korti we should get these good things as our regular rations.

Hearing that in some cases, isolated boat's crews

belonging to another regiment had prematurely sampled their consignments, I thought it well to fall the company in along the bank and say a word of warning to them. I pitched it in as strong as I could, saying the port wine was meant to save the lives of wounded comrades and it might save their own lives; also, that if we were so wicked as to eat the boiled mutton now we could not eat it afterwards, in the heat of the conflict, when we should want it much more. After I had done, an old soldier named Cameron asked the Colour-Sergeant to bring him up as he had something to say. What he said to me was, "Some of us would like you to know, sir, that though we mean to obey the order, we have served too long to believe that that jam or cheese will ever come the way of our bellies." Nothing I could say would persuade him that the Guards and the cavalry would not get hold of it, but, in fact, not a pot of jam or an ounce of cheese was short when, on arriving at last at Korti, we were ordered to hand it over to the cavalry and Guards and were duly filled up again with the weary stuff from Chicago and the weevily biscuit. Once again the aristos and that old, cold shade of the Peninsular war!

Now what was the force which kept the half-starved men of the Gordons going dry for weeks, whilst the port wine gurgled at their feet?

Reason had nothing to do with it, for they did not believe the order, saying they were bringing up the stuff for themselves. Fear may be set aside at once. Punishment was impossible, and they knew it. An exhausted, underfed soldier could not be set by his captain to tramp up and down



the bank in heavy marching order through the night watches when that same captain wanted to squeeze every ounce of energy out of that same soldier next day, starting with the first streak of dawn. At the most an entry might be made on the man's defaulter sheet, and who cares about a black mark on paper when a battle is coming along which will square all accounts for ever?

The ordinary disciplinary apparatus had disappeared. No Lieutenant-Colonel: no Adjutant: no Sergeant-Major. A single boat was often separated for days and nights from the others, and might be in charge of a Corporal. As for duty or patriotism, there was small scope for these high motives in a punitive expedition so remote in every sense from home and home interests. The imagination of the junior officers and of the rank and file had not *yet* been in any sense touched by the idea of Gordon or of his peril. The thought that the British Cabinet had elaborately worked out this stupendous campaign so that every one should just be too late had not dared present itself to our humble and somewhat trusting minds. Yet "D" Company of the Gordon Highlanders worked feverishly—crimelessly—incessantly. The worst characters worked hardest and gave least trouble because they had *most* character, but all played up. Had every soldier been going to his bridal he could not have been in a greater hurry than he now appeared to be to exchange his bullets with the spear-thrusts of swarms of exceedingly nasty fanatics. By what pull—by the use of what leverage—did the captain obtain so much for so little?



By working upon the men's *esprit de corps*, upon their religion—the honour of the Regiment.

The special type of discipline we possess at this moment is excellent. Whereas one Continental form depends too much upon good will, and the other not enough on good will, and whereas both of these forms must expect to be half-submerged on the first outbreak of trouble by the flow of outer civilian sentiment into the ranks, our own discipline will be strengthened by the reservists. Our own discipline has fairly solved the problem of a real camaraderie between officers and men and, on the other hand, it was Haldane who managed, one drowsy afternoon, in the House of Commons, with me, the Adjutant-General, perspiring in the background, to carry a measure entirely against the trend of the times and the sentiment of the voters by doubling the Commander's legal powers of punishment; not with a view to his inflicting severer punishment, but with the idea (and it has proved well-founded) of doing away with the need for any punishment at all! What this has done for discipline, and how much it helped us to win the Great War, is quite unsuspected by the young soldiers now serving with the Colours.

Here stands our Army ready to take from the nation the poor and unsuccessful and give to their characters the coping-stone of courage and to their minds the stimulus of travel and of great traditions. We use any patriotism or civil virtue we can find, but strive to focus them on the Corps; on something definite instead of something vague. We do big spadework in fields which should long ago have been ploughed and sown by the Education Depart-

ment and by the Church. But we have a lot to do, for neither Church nor State schools nor parents impart to British youth the high type of patriotism on which, for instance, the Swiss boys and girls are brought up. Our lads come to the recruiting sergeant with a crude notion that they are better, wiser and braver than foreigners, but national conceit is but bastard patriotism at best. Still, we take that raw material and work wonders with it, establishing, as we go, a happier, more brotherly tone between officers and men than obtains in any other European Army.

A British military unit is a standing object lesson to the civil population in order, cleanliness, politeness, punctuality, and good feeling. It exemplifies the Socialists' dream, only that the officers are imposed from outside. How, then, if they were drawn, like the non-commissioned officers, from within?

I have said that the new discipline demands of an officer that he should prove himself a better man than his men. But, in peace, how? At his job? Yes; more thorough knowledge of the business in hand; greater force of character and competency; a higher standard of education; these tend to give their possessor the whip hand over his associates. And whereas, as I have tried to show, this should be easier for our officers to achieve than for their Continental comrades, yet every year that passes the standards go up. British non-commissioned officers are now well read, clear-thinking individuals, and what would have satisfied a sergeant fifteen years ago will hardly, to-day, pass muster with a corporal. Our officers will have to play up for all they are worth to maintain this

moral ascendancy over men who already are sometimes their superiors in technical knowledge of the detail of their profession. Why, then, should not the non-commissioned officers themselves be promoted regularly into the commissioned ranks? Because of the temperament of the British crowd which must here be diagnosed; for no General dare neglect it. An increasing number of us look out upon the world with eyes of another colour, but I am talking of the class from which we draw our soldiers, and what I say is true as regards three out of four of them.

In England social position is an aid to discipline: in Scotland gentle birth. In the Commonwealth or the Dominions these are rather handicaps than helps: in the United Kingdom they still carry some of their ancient prestige. The English soldier is extraordinarily immune to the stings of envy or the serpent's tooth of contrast: no more generous disposition and (if a disposition can be large-minded?) no more large-minded disposition exists anywhere in the world. Where the German, Frenchman, Spaniard, Russian, and Japanese are always asking themselves bitterly, "Why should So-and-so have this and I only get that?" the British soldier sings quite philosophically to the mess bugle, "Officers' wives have puddings and pies, but soldiers' wives get skilly." He states an interesting fact and that's all about it. He is not anxious that the status of his officer should be lowered; on the contrary, it tickles his sense of proprietorship that his captain should cut a dash with his polo ponies and be a man of quality and class. There are masses of people going about the world—frightful

snobs themselves in their own special way—who will call this rank snobbery. They would call Christ a snob for saying "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." Anyway, the truth is the truth, so why not be brave enough to bring it out?

The Scottish soldier for his part—very likely a Socialist by conviction—keeps up his sleeve a queer, old-engrained liking for the Laird (if he is real; not a Carnegie or a McAbraham). When one thinks of the thousands of radical school-mistresses striving to eradicate sentiment and tradition from their pupils and to plant in their places a paltry egoism, the fact seems supernatural, but fact it undoubtedly remains.

Social distinctions with us carry right away down in very fine gradations from Throne to Workhouse. In an English Yeomanry corps it is difficult to make the man whose father employs two labourers upon his farm a non-commissioned officer over the head of a man whose father employs eight labourers. The Commanding Officer may insist, of course, but only at the expense of discipline.

• In the maintaining of a high standard of discipline nothing should be neglected, least of all race. We Northerners have a cult for heroism, for imagination and for legislation. But amongst us are embedded strangers from the South. • These, too, have their great virtues and their cult for intelligence as opposed to imagination and for commerce as opposed to law. We like these sojourners who have come to stay. We admire them as true and patriotic citizens. *But* (if we do not know it already we should know it) they find it difficult to maintain

discipline over British soldiers. There are exceptions. Amongst the Australians there was a notable exception during the war. On the whole, admirable, devoted as they may be as officers, they can neither say "come" nor "go" as a British Centurion ought to say them to a British soldier. If, therefore, they are employed as combatant officers it must be at the expense of discipline; although they may fill the top notches of staff work to the admiration of other officers in the Army.

Again, the British soldier will not accept an Asiatic officer even in peace-time. He declines to salute him. In a narrow sense this is unfortunate. It cuts us off from the Russian methods of satisfying the legitimate aspirations of dark-skinned races. A General Alikhanoff is, as yet, an impossibility to us. Still, there it is! Personal Pride is half the battle in a drawing-room, but racial pride is the whole battle in an Empire. If it were not for that pride we, the rulers of millions of Asiatics, would have contaminated the purity of our blood and have already let ourselves down into half-castes. If the North Americans had not inherited some of that sin from us, they would already have ruined the New World by marrying ten million negroes.

Too many promotions from the ranks strain discipline. One of the grounds on which these have been advocated is that the officer who has been through the mill (like the butler who has been through the pantry) knows all the ropes; all the tricks, and that is exactly—so it happens—the main argument against him: the ranker knows too much. He gets on the nerves of the men: does not handle them as tactfully as do the graduates

of universities and of Sandhurst ; is harder on them all round. In short, it is not likely ever to be desirable, *on military grounds*, to change the present system of commissioning a privileged class of officers. For, whereas the theorist can pick a hundred holes in the method, the truth remains that British soldiers steadily refuse to think by the rules of logic, and, whereas the democrat is outraged by inequality, the British soldier is suspicious of his equal. Yet, as nothing but smashing disaster will stop a political trend, some day, probably, the present system will be revised. When that day comes may the guardian angel of the British Empire whisper into the ear of whoever may be at its helm—democratise the Army if you must, but, if so, do it by promotion from the ranks of the nation ; not, except as a special reward for a special service, from the ranks of the army.<sup>1</sup>

If birth ; social position ; manners ; and a public school education in character and leadership are to be cast aside—do let us at least have the one and only military merit we can, to some extent, gauge and guarantee. Do let us have brains and let the competition be thrown right open to the nation. As to the future career of the democratic competition wallah we have our model at Duntroon in Australia.

<sup>1</sup> In case anyone should remind me of my personal responsibility for the arrangement whereby the names of three non-commissioned officers were secretly noted for promotion to Commissions from the ranks of each unit in case of war, I would anticipate such criticism by pointing out that these were to be nominations by the Commander and were to be based on character and manners, not on an examination in which all the orderly-room clerks would come out on top and all the fighting leaders be at the bottom.

From the moment the boys pass they must not cost their parents one sixpence. They must be fed, clothed, educated free, and must be given State pocket-money into the bargain. They should be at least three years at the Military College and when they join they must be paid a living wage. These should be good value, and that is more than could ever be said for old non-commissioned officers, who fall short, be they French or be they British, through lack of the sense of perspective. No matter how clever; how brave; how successful; here is the rock which wrecks them in the end. They can't distinguish between the vital and the trivial; the significant and the insignificant. Nine times out of ten, the command of a battalion is their limit.

Finally, lest anyone should quote the Marshals of Napoleon, it may be as well to remind him that they rose, not of a peace-time Army, but from a nation in arms. Those splendid adventurers, sons most of them of the smaller bourgeoisie, would never have sprung from the ranks of a small voluntarily enlisted Army; to a man France had entered for the baton.

Popularity helps discipline. In Napoleon's Army affection was ever a stronger lever than apprehension. In 1831 a gunner of the Imperial Guard wrote thus to General Drouot under whom he served in 1810 :

"The main thing, say I, is to make oneself liked by the soldier, because, if the Colonel is disliked, no one is extra keen to get himself killed by the order of someone he detests. At Wagram, where it was as hot as they make it and where our regiment did so famously, do you suppose that if you had not been popular, the gunners of the Guard would have manœuvred so well as they did? As for me, my General, never have I found another



Colonel who knew, as you did, how to speak to a soldier ; you were severe, certainly, but just ; no word louder than the other, no cursing, or flying into a temper ; in short, you used to speak to a soldier as if he had been your equal. There are officers who speak to soldiers as if they were equals of the soldiers, but that is no good at all, is what I say.”<sup>1</sup>

A human document this, proving that no great chasm yawns between the French and British private soldier. The cosmopolitan codes of the immaculate crowds who talk all languages and wear the same cut of clothes may mask totally different outlooks upon life ; the rank and file of Armies, although they cannot speak to one another, although they eat different food, wear different uniforms and possess different manners and customs, are yet very much of the same way of thinking. The remarks of Drouot's gunner will appeal to many a British red-coat. No man is so much disliked as the man who talks down to his men. Condescension breeds curses. So too, speaking loud at inspections so that all may hear the feeble joke, “that is no good at all, is what I say.” Popularity with our men is a mystery. After a life spent watching, I am none the wiser, except that I begin to believe that a mass of men can read a man when individuals cannot ; and, also, I do see clearly enough that the sure way to lose popularity is to seek it.

Courage is supposed by civilians to be the soldier's *sine qua non*. Were I mischievous, I could quote one or two examples to the contrary and especially, I think, I could prove that, owing to their upbringing, moral courage is rarer amongst soldiers in high place than it is amongst any other class of the

<sup>1</sup> Taken from *Notre Armée*, by Commandant Emile Manceau.



British community. As to physical courage, although sheer cowardice (i.e., a man thinking of his own miserable carcass when he ought to be thinking of his men) is fatal, yet, on the other hand, a reputation for not knowing fear does not help an officer in his war discipline: in getting his company to follow him as the Artillery of the Guard followed Drouot at Wagram. I noticed this first in Afghanistan in 1879 and have often since made the same observation. If a British officer wishes to make his men shy of taking a lead from him let him stand up under fire whilst they lie in their trenches as did the Russians on the 17th of July at the battle of Motienling. Our fellows are not in the least impressed by bravado. All they say is, "This fellow is a fool. If he cares so little for his own life, how much less will he care for ours."

Up to a point fear of ridicule is a potent disciplinary agent. The officer who can score off a soldier inclined to be sulky or cheeky and make his comrades laugh at him holds a powerful weapon. But he must remember always that the arrows of his wit strike a man who is defenceless in so far as he cannot retort in kind.

"Discipline makes the main force of Armies," say the French regulations; "An Army is a people who obeys," said Napoleon; and although Marshal de Saxe struck a truer note when he said victory must be sought in the hearts of human beings, yet discipline does stand supreme amongst all the technical aids. Confidence in the superior skill, experience and character of the Commander; respect for his personality; devotion to the regiment; reliance upon comrades; habit; these give the type

of discipline that will stand the wear and tear of time. As Colonel Ardant du Picq well remarks: "Discipline is not made to order, cannot be created off-hand; it is a matter of the institution of tradition. The Commander must have absolute confidence in his right to command, must have the habit of command, pride in commanding. It is this which gives a strong discipline to Armies commanded by an aristocracy, whenever such a thing exists." And, if the aristocracy of birth does not exist, or is not to be permitted to play its part, let an aristocracy of intellect be created.

In defining the modern type of discipline on page 105 it may be remembered that I put first amongst its factors "*a sense of duty (res publica)*." Also, it may have been noticed that beyond that bald statement I have said nothing whatever about duty. The reason is that hardly a flicker of a sense of duty exists in Greater Britain—exists, I mean, as a working basis for business. This discovery came to me with something like a shock, only as a result of pondering over the factors of discipline.

Why, it may be urged, did I then enumerate the motive and even give it the place of honour in my definition?

Because, even as I write these words, I still believe in a strong sense of duty. Because Nelson's proud signal must incline any man of our race to think the same. Because there is hardly a foreign military work which does not make duty the backbone both of Command and of obedience. Because I know that the Japanese, in the last great war but one, relied more upon a sense of public duty than upon

any other force whatsoever, whether moral or material. The following letter of challenge from Captain Broke to Captain Lawrence shows that duty was a live motive in Nelson's times:—

"As the *Chesapeake* appears now ready for sea, I request you will do me the favour to meet the *Shannon* with her, ship to ship, to try the fortune of our respective flags. . . . I entreat you, sir, not to imagine that I am urged by mere personal vanity to the wish of meeting the *Chesapeake* or that I depend only upon your personal ambition for your acceding to this invitation. We both have nobler motives. You will feel it as a compliment if I say, that the result of our meeting may be the most grateful service I can render to my country; and I doubt not that you, equally confident of success, will feel convinced, that it is only by repeated triumphs in *even combats* that your little Navy can now hope to console your country for the loss of that trade it can no longer protect. Favour me with a speedy reply. We are short of provisions and water, and cannot stay longer here."

"Duty," in its most perfect manifestation, as personified seventeen years ago by the Japanese Officer, lies in an extreme simplicity—in a total absence of self-consciousness, pose or attempt to make capital out of self. The officer who has to give an order feels he has got to express to his subordinates not *his* ideas but the wishes (as far as he can imagine them) of the State. The private soldier is not so much the captain's subordinate as in other Armies. They may exchange cigarettes "off duty." But "on duty" both are equally State servants; equally, in a sense, important; equally, in a sense, worthy of respect; equally, in a sense, mere atoms of transient dust; also, by the will of the Emperor, it happens, at that moment, to be the duty of one selected servant to point out the path of duty to another selected servant.

The slant-eyed children of the old pirates of the Yellow Sea have been bred for duty just as short-horn breeders have produced milk out of a breed which used to aim only at beef. The dues of others; the privileges of others; the sinking of the atom in the mass; these are what have been scrubbed into their round little craniums from babyhood. The British have bred all along for independence. "Our noble selves"; "those outsiders"; "'eave 'alf a brick at that furriner"; "this villa, I beg to inform you, sir, is a castle," etc., etc., etc. So you may as well flog a dead horse as boom duty to Britishers. Vestiges remain. Selection Boards try to forget their favourites and to do what is best for the Service. But, in the Army generally, there is no doubt that duty, as a word, has lost caste. An officer says, "Oh, d— it, I'm on duty to-morrow!" A soldier "doing duty" is working away at the routines of musketry, guards, parades, route marches, whereas his comrade, the lucky man, is "struck off duty." The word is worn out—tired. Nelson wrote it in coloured bunting on the sky; teachers scribble it on to blackboards; poets—"Stern Daughter of the voice of God! O Duty": it never gets a rest. We must try to console ourselves by the thought that if the horizons of our Armies had been limited to what was their sheer duty, their greatest victory would have been their worst defeat. In war we have all got to do more than our duty—and that is the lesson the British individual must learn.

Individualism? The Kaiser is a queer fellow to quote—part devil, part dilettante, the people have been taught to think him—but he had his points: he knew and admired England; he knew and

dreaded Russia. So it interests me now to recall what he said to me about individualism. "Each nation its own characteristics: the way to destroy Russia is to encourage the individualism of the peasants; the way to destroy Britain is to throw over the individualism which begot you." The idea amused me almost as much as his other idea of regenerating Ireland by making motor spirit out of potatoes, but now that the bureaucratic dragon is rattling its tail of three hundred thousand typewriters, I begin to think there was something in it.

So much for discipline, but before pressing on to training it will be better to give a couple of examples, drawn from our own lives, of the fighting value of "the main force of Armies." If ever there was a war made to illustrate the value of discipline, that war was fought in South Africa through 1899-1902. At the start no one could class our organisation higher than "indifferent." Discipline was admirable and, according to European or Indian Frontier standards, units were highly trained in the arts of reconnaissance, security, attack, defence, and musketry. The Boer Commandos were well enough organised for the very special conditions of their environment. They possessed no discipline. The civil law created the Commando and handed it over in the raw to the Field Cornet. As to training, officers and men had been born and bred for the unique purpose of veldt and kopje work over a vast semi-desert, sub-continent in a way that made each individual Boer the equal of half a dozen European, American or Japanese soldiers on that particular theatre. The rival organisations then may fairly be struck out as more or less equally balanced, and

the Boer superiority as an individual warrior in his own country may be taken to be neutralised by our great superiority of numbers. As to their *morale*, the Boers were animated by an intense patriotism, whereas there was nothing beyond *esprit de corps*, love of adventure and medals to inspire our British soldiers. Here, as I hope to make clear later, was an immense advantage to the enemy. We have already struck out organisation and training on either side of the equation and so we are left now with *morale* against us and only our discipline to the good: our other advantages have been wiped out on the cross-account and our discipline stands face to face with the patriotism of the Boers.

Well, it was discipline won against patriotism. If any Commando leader could have relied on any number of his men to obey his orders exactly and implicitly we should have lost that war and with it, by now, after hideous Indian and Sudanese mutinies, our Empire.

On the 6th January, 1900, at 1 p.m., the British, worn out by close fighting for eleven consecutive hours, were surprised by the sudden charge of a handful of the enemy supported by a heavy covering fire and were knocked clean off an outpost of the defence of Ladysmith called Waggon Hill Point. Discipline rallied our fellows at the foot of the hill and led them back, up rocks, through thorn bushes, to the counter-attack. Just under the crest those who were careless were picked off by the enemy; those who were more careful saw them and will not easily forget that tiny forlorn hope of the Burgers; several, firing as fast as they could at the leaders of the British rally; several with their heads turned

the other way shouting to their own men close below for God's sake to come up, that the "Point" was captured and now had only to be held. A word of command, a charge and within ten seconds these heroes had bit the dust; Waggon Hill was once more in our hands and our grip even a little extended.

Without discipline Waggon Hill had been lost! From Waggon Hill Point, Waggon Hill proper could be taken in reverse at fixed-sight range. As Waggon Hill Point stood towards Waggon Hill, so did Waggon Hill to Cæsar's Camp. The whole southern outwork of Ladysmith town was, therefore, virtually gone and with it many of the lives and all the stamina and resolution of the three thousand men holding it. Whether this would have involved the fall of Ladysmith next day no man living can say. As a question of *morale* I myself firmly believe that it would. But my point is that, at Waggon Hill Point, several hundred Boers were lying amongst the grass and rocks close below, within speaking distance of those gallant leaders (not more than a dozen) who had made good the summit; several thousand more crouched within rifle range. The Point had been fairly rushed, though only by a tiny forlorn hope, and it could have been held against all of us (for our forces on the spot were weak and very tired) had it only been possible for the Boer leaders to *order* up their supports instead of having to *ask*, to *entreat*, and to entreat, God be praised, in vain.

My second example is chosen on a *vice versa* principle from Elandslaagte. At that engagement the Boers were pinned down to their position by a



frontal attack which was not pressed home whilst the main attack was thrown by a wide encircling march against their left flank. After taking the frontal attack to its ground, the Infantry Commander and his staff ran across and cut into the track of the flank attack. Coming to a wire fence about 300 yards from the fight then raging with extreme violence, he was painfully impressed by the long lines of dead and wounded who lay on either side of this obstacle. Close by him the Commanding Officer of the Gordon Highlanders, who had been severely wounded, was struggling to rejoin his battalion, whilst a hospital orderly was endeavouring to keep him back. As the Infantry Commander and his staff paused to take in this sad scene, and just as Captain Ronnie Brooke, his A.D.C., was pointing out that the heavy loss must have been due to the exact range of the wire fence being known to the enemy—suddenly, one of these corpses, that of a sergeant, started to its feet and began to run towards the firing line. Another rose also, dashed forward some twenty yards desperately and again threw itself flat upon the ground. The mystery was explained. Two-thirds of these men were shamming dead. In a couple of minutes they were running as fast as their legs would carry them into the thick of the bullets. More were picked up on the way and so the Commander got to close quarters with something like a hundred rifles, not at his back but in front of him. Once fairly plunged into the *mêlée* these lads—who had merely been stunned—paralysed—by their first introduction to the Mauser bullet—fought as well as anybody else. Had our soldiers been Boers, i.e., undisciplined men,



not one of them would have moved—why should they?—and a touch-and-go affair would have ended in “go.”

In this matter of discipline our British Army stands second to none; no, that is not putting it strongly enough—it stands an easy first amongst the nations, on firm ground well reconnoitred through many hundred years. The Army insists on discipline and our chief concern in these flabby times is to safeguard the prestige of authority. To that end the authority must be specially selected as possessing qualities of judgment and impartiality. Also, once the Commanding Officer<sup>1</sup> has been thus selected, power must be placed at his disposal, not so much for use but rather to be held in reserve as a deterrent. Only let the Commander be secure in his prestige and then the rank and file can be handled without resort to punishment. Once they have got used to it, to discipline, it will become less hard for them to act as if they were brave than to behave frankly like cowards; less difficult to be orderly, punctual and respectful than to be irregular, sluggardly or insubordinate. Discipline thus administered and accepted means certainly that the troops subject to its influence will behave creditably under any test fortune may have in store for them. The

<sup>1</sup> On the 1st May, 1910, the powers of British Commanding Officers were doubled at one stroke. The measure was sharply opposed by estimable persons who honestly believed the best way to create an Army was to administer it on civilian principles. Horrible abuses were foretold. Up to date they have not occurred. But, since then, great battles have been won by discipline and our Empire has perhaps been saved by the higher standards secured to the Army by Haldane.—IAN H.

French nation were led straight into the jaws of destruction by their denial of the lessons of history on this matter. Some two years before the grand *débâcle* M. Jules Simon made in the French Chamber the following inimitable appeal to all the enemies of his country to be bold and to violate her with impunity.

M. Jules Simon : " When I say that the Army we wish to create is to be an Army of citizens and that it is to possess no particle of military spirit, I am not making a concession, I am making a declaration, and a declaration of which I am proud, for it is in order that there should be no military spirit that we wish to have an Army of citizens invincible at home and impotent to carry war outside their own borders. . . . If there is no such thing as an Army<sup>1</sup> without a military spirit, I beg that we may have an Army which is not an Army." (Laughter and disturbance.)

M. Eugene Pelletan : " Down with the Pretorians ! " (Up-roar.)

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<sup>1</sup> The same old story—the same old idea—was alive in England but yesterday. No barrack square. Officers from the ranks. A million bayonets invincible at home and not only " impotent " for carrying out war outside their own borders, but legally debarred from doing so. Observe the programmes of the various Leagues and Associations. Read, also, this extract from the *Labour Leader* of the last week in February, 1913 :—

" ALL OR NONE.

" We are glad it (the Territorial Force) has broken down. We are for all or none. Military service is either a necessity, or it is not. We want no professional Army as a body of janissaries to serve the master class against the people. Every soldier a citizen and every citizen a soldier, or no soldiers at all."

As I have pointed out already in these essays there is no worse motto than All or None. By getting All in this instance the value of the Army as a defensive instrument against foreigners would be 0 !

There is warning to us in these words—in these rotten words—invincible at home and impotent outside their own borders. For offence or for defence; on the line of march or in the bivouac; overseas or in England there is no such thing now, and never was nor will be, as an Army good at home and bad abroad. In the 'sixties M. Simon was talking already as the Poles and Jews are talking in Glasgow to-day. An Army is good everywhere or it is bad everywhere, and the force that makes it insensible to the local atmosphere is just atmosphere.

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Since this chapter was written I have come across *The Times Literary Supplement* of 22nd April, 1920. In this is a critique of the monumental work by Major-General Sir Archibald Montgomery on the work of the Fourth Army during the Battles of Hundred Days. The critique, after giving reasons for our victory, ends thus:—

“Above all, as General Montgomery with just emphasis declares, British military discipline has no equal in the armies of Europe, being based on mutual confidence and respect between officers and men.”

## CHAPTER VII

### TRAINING

Organisation and discipline have now been expounded, feebly perhaps, but faithfully. The one gives order, proportion, method ; the other, cohesion, confidence in comrades. Of the artificial, applied characteristics of an Army there remains training ; i.e., the course of instruction and exercises whereby *self*-confidence is imparted to the individual soldier by letting him feel that his mind and body have been well prepared to play their part with credit in God's grand competitive examination of the nations ; in the art of using space and time, ground and weapons like a professional as opposed to an amateur.

A variety of causes combine to give the public an exaggerated idea of the value of training to the rank and file of an Army. I say rank and file because training, i.e., practice in handling masses of men and material, is most precious to Generals and Staff. They are aware of that fact and they boom training. Subalterns, again, who are judged mainly by their quickness and savvy in the field ; the men who draw honour and profit from marksmanship and skill at arms—nay, those numerous students who study war by its battles, or the Great

General Staff themselves who deal with and live by training ; all these are in the habit of speaking as if training was soldiering and a trained band an Army.

In other words, training, by being the most obvious of the attributes of an Army, has come to have its importance overrated. As a wholesome corrective, therefore, it is desirable to bear in mind that, after all, the Afridi tribesman or the Red Indian of the prairie is better trained to fight over his own ground than any regular soldier : and yet, regular soldiers defeat these partisans with ease ! Marshal Bugeaud, most practical of nineteenth century commanders, has said that the technical training of soldiers can be compassed in three months, and this is the same Bugeaud who declared that three years was not long enough to create those soldiers "loving the colours, confident in their chiefs and in their comrades to the right and left of them . . . who form Armies fit to gain battles at the outset of a campaign." "All apprenticeship" (meaning thereby training of infantry) "can be got through in a few months," is the dictum of another well-known Continental authority.

As a Commander gains experience he realises that of battles, real and sham, it may truly be said, you never know your luck, but that the best way to be lucky is to be plucky. He accepts the battle with joyous relief as the final test of his troops and of himself ; he knows he must be prepared to be judged and to stand or fall by that test ; yet, he knows also all the time that battles are rare events and that, meanwhile, the Army lives, marches, works, and has its being by organisation and discipline.

Further, after his first general action he will be surprised, if he thinks it over, to recollect how very great a part organisation and discipline, or their absence, had to say to success or failure.

Organisation in the guise of internal economy gave the men a cup of hot coffee before they entered upon the thirty hours' struggle on the heights—a cup of coffee without which their skill at arms would certainly have failed them. Discipline enabled him to control his fire even in the tumult and confusion of the night attack—discipline which saved the situation when the men had begun to use their “training” to shoot one another.

All my own bias is in favour of training. The best energies of my life have been devoted to fire tactics and the cult of marksmanship. The significance of our own lives is strangely hidden away from us. Since the Ingogo when Sir George Colley, the British Commander, distracted to see his young troops missing a whole Commando of Mounted Boers at close range, seized a rifle from the hands of a soldier and exclaiming, “Good God, you can't hit a haystack!” shot one of the enemy; since the battle of Majuba Hill, when the British lost two-thirds of their force and the Boers only lost one man; when I myself was crippled for life as a penalty for being a bit slow in taking aim; ever since those days I have preached and fought and begged and prayed for musketry. Were my work to be remembered after me for a few years, I fondly hoped it might be in connection with the marksmanship of the British Army, yet now that my membership of the Large Black Pig Society gives me some leisure for reflection, I do really believe my one

year's work as Adjutant-General accomplished more through the media of organisation and discipline than my lifetime spent at tactics and training.

Organisation and discipline are deeper things than training, and I call to mind the first order issued by Bonaparte to the Army he was going to lead across the Alps to the superb victory of Marengo: "In every demi-brigade, to-morrow, the conscripts must be made to fire several shots, so that they may know with which eye to take aim and how to load their musket." Once again, if training was supreme, how could any regular troops hold their own for a moment in the hills against the Afridis. We do not dominate them by superior training. If a British soldier or a Sikh gave a lifetime to it he could never use the terrain of the mountain-side, never conceal himself, never shoot, never move, advance, retire, charge, like an Afridi! Organisation and discipline are the weapons of civilisation, and these, handled with wisdom and courage, win as against training.

The following microscopic, "one man" instance of failure to rise to the occasion may enable an opinion to be formed of the relative values of training versus other military qualities when the soldier finds himself at bay upon the edge of eternity. A raw, young militiaman went out on his first trek in 1900 and, with the rest of his company, held a ridge against the enemy. When the company had to "git" he was left behind because he had fallen fast asleep behind a rock and could not be found. In the evening he made his way back to camp, but it was deserted. The column had marched bag-and-baggage away. So he decided to stay



where he was for the night, and fell asleep again in one of the trenches on the perimeter. Early next morning, when he awoke, three Boers were within a few yards of him searching the empty camping ground for dropped rounds of ammunition. Their rifles were slung and they had no suspicion a British soldier was within miles. He, the local representative of the greatest, most famous Empire of history, was armed ; ready ; and under cover. The game was in his hands and so, he stood up—and surrendered ! Afterwards, under examination, the lad turned out to be destitute of any soldierly virtue. He was not a conscientious objector, but it had never occurred to him that he could possibly do anything but surrender.

No amount of tactical training would have made this product of our State educational system—this unfortunate militiaman—into a *soldier* ! All that the best instruction over ground might have taught him could not have put him into a better position, relatively to his enemy, than that in which he proved himself so impotent. He did possess an elementary knowledge of musketry and the range was so short that he could not have missed. Had he been a first-class marksman, perhaps his *morale* might have been heartened by the fact. Realisation of skill at arms may reflect itself in courage. Thus a bad shot requires great pluck if he is to track up a wounded tiger, whereas a man who can make a right and left every time at the running deer gains a certain self-confidence and need not put it all upon his nerves. Still, having said so much for training, it must be confessed that it was something deeper than lack of training which was amiss with this misfire in the field. Neither his mother



nor his school teacher had ever prepared him for so stern an ordeal—the fate of many another. Six months under a keen Captain, that's what he wanted; something to put some spirit into him; something to give him a notion of what a great nation expects of those who wear its uniform and represent it amongst foreigners and enemies.

Another "one man" instance from South Africa: when day broke in the morning of 27th February, 1881, the handful of British soldiers and sailors who had climbed the precipitous flanks of Majuba Hill were greatly and justly elated. The key to the enemy's position was held in their hands just as firmly as if they had surprised the citadel of a besieged city. From the lofty summit towards which during the whole long night they had been climbing they now looked down upon the Boer laagers from the rear and it was plain to everyone that the enemy had been out-manceuvred. All that remained was for the main force at Mount Prospect to advance and "make good."

A little later and the moral atmosphere was changed. Nothing had happened; nothing of importance. The Boers were still down below; we were still up on top. Only a single shot had been fired by the enemy, a very long shot for those days of 1,000 yards, mortally wounding Commander Romilly who had climbed to the top of a mound to get a better view; clearly the shot had been aimed. Our fellows could not shoot like that. The whole 370 or whatever their number was—myself amongst them—felt depressed.

Striking examples of the triumph of training are not easy to give, first, because training does not

in point of fact tell so much in deciding campaigns as is usually imagined; secondly, because what seems to be good training, according to tradition and the accepted standards, may prove disastrous when it is put to the test against a fresh enemy, or after a long peace. We ought in this summer of 1921 to be hard at work evolving an entirely new system of training for an entirely new Army. We are not doing anything. Well, some other powers may be doing something, and if they do evolve a new model battalion it will probably prove capable of knocking spots off a brigade organised and trained as were the brigades which wound up the war. Volley-firing in its day and place was very superior to independent firing. Every volley which was fired by order was a reassurance of the grip of discipline over the ranks and, in a regular battle, the collective method had been proved over and over again to be the more deadly. But the day came when it was out of place. At Monongahela, Braddock kept his men in their ranks and made them fire regular volleys into the forest to their front, whilst all around them, from behind every tree trunk, Indians and French *voyageurs* were blazing away into their exposed mass. The whizz of a bullet brings sense into the thickest skull and some of the red-coats, taking a leaf out of the Redskins' book, got under cover and were beginning to make a fight of it. But to Braddock this was blasphemy against the drill book<sup>1</sup>; an outrage upon all prin-

<sup>1</sup> At Meerut, in the 'eighties, a Senior Officer gave his views on fire tactics to the Battalion Commanders. On leaving, one of them, much scandalised, said to a companion, "He spoke against the Book!" meaning thereby the Drill Book. A

ciples of training. Death before dishonour. With oaths the skirmishers were recalled to their rôle of being targets in the middle of the ring and after standing it a while—they bolted!

The part played by training is more easily disentangled from the skein of the incidents of a sea-fight than it is from encounters which take place on dry land. Inanimate things and mechanical appliances, with the handling thereof, have counted until now for far more on a ship than in bivouacs, in column of route or in attack or retreat over terra-firma. Therefore, also, the part played by practice in this art of handling things (which includes the ship herself as well as her gear) becomes more vital to a Navy than to an Army. Even in gunnery and musketry, where it might be imagined conditions were equal, high training is more essential to the bluejacket. There is no use drawing a bow at a venture on the high seas, though we have Biblical testimony as to its occasional value on shore. Thus, a sailor misses his ship and there's no chance of anything else except perhaps a whale. A soldier misses a Corporal and, a mile away, hits a General.

A very good case for training is furnished by the famous fight between the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake* on the 1st June, 1813.

“ And as the war they did provoke,  
We'll pay them with our cannon;  
The first to do it will be Broke,  
In the gallant ship the *Shannon*.”

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Presbyterian Divine of sixty years ago, defending the Holy Bible against an atheist, could not have displayed more concern for the finality of his doctrine than did this Old Boy (who afterwards attained to most respectable heights in his career) for a compilation by British plagiarists.

Certainly, Broke was the first "to do it," and none too soon either! In 1812 our Navy was at the zenith of its glory. Never, since the days of the Carthaginians, had the Empire of the Sea more splendidly been made good. Impressed English sailors had met Continental conscript sailors and had beaten them wherever they did meet them. "Between 1793 . . . and May, 1812 . . . out of 200 actions between single ships, we were only defeated five times, and on each of those five occasions our vessels were of inferior force to the enemy."<sup>1</sup> But British frigates "manned by pressed men"<sup>2</sup> were how to meet those crews which had "enlisted freely in the American ships."<sup>2</sup>

In the first seven months of the war five "single ship" contests took place in succession between voluntary service Americans and pressed Englishmen (three frigate contests and two sloop encounters) and in each of them the British were whipped. We have a perfect genius for forgetting the apprenticeship of defeats through a regular series of which it is our practice to emerge, in virtue of our tenacity, to the victories embroidered on our colours. Often the defeats were the memorable happenings, the famous victories mere walks over for lucky dogs who came in at the end when the backs of the enemy had been broken: no matter! The defeats are so clean wiped off the national slate that only by digging into dusty old chronicles and newspapers is it possible to realise the prodigious effect of naval actions which caused *The Times* to commence a leader with the words "Good God!" Here indeed

<sup>1</sup> Captain H. J. G. Garbett, R.N.

<sup>2</sup> Clowes, *History of the Royal Navy*.

was a shrewd set-back for the politicians ; ignorant, then as now, of the human heart and its bearing upon battles, they were dumbfounded to see their wonderfully disciplined crews strike their flags to a rabble of Americans, many of them British deserters, just because they happened to have the free will to fight. Then, at last, on the top of so much depression ; so much (in the words of *The Times*) "disgrace to our naval character," came the perfect summer's day when, in a setting which must have thrilled even a conscientious objector, the *Chesapeake* of 50 guns and 440 men met the *Shannon* of 330 men and 50 guns<sup>1</sup>; when the flotilla of pleasure boats put out from Boston to see the great capture, and when—

" Brave Broke he waved his sword  
And says he, my lads aboard."

But it was not bravery—it was not the sword<sup>2</sup> that won this victory of conscripts against volunteers. The Americans were equally brave, as their casualties showed. Nor was it discipline, although the hearts of these Englishmen on board the *Shannon* had been won to a deeper, truer discipline than compulsory

<sup>1</sup> " They were tolerably well matched in size, the *Chesapeake* being only 70 tons larger than her antagonist and her broadside only 50 pounds heavier. The greatest disparity was in their respective crews, the American force out-numbering the British by 110 men."—*Arcadian Recorder*, January 16th, 1813.

<sup>2</sup> " Nor was the American commander (Lawrence) inferior to his opponent in courage and weight of character. He had a short time previously, while in command of the U.S. sloop-of-war *Hornet*, captured, after a short and gallant contest, the sloop-of-war *Peacock*, one of the finest ships of her class in the British Navy."—*Arcadian Recorder*.

service usually reaches by the fact that their commander was "beloved for gentleness and equanimity."<sup>1</sup> No; it was training did it; training in gunnery and marksmanship. Broke's own modest dispatch speaks of his crew and of "the tremendous precision of their fire." From the day in which he joined her "the *Shannon* began to feel the effect of her Captain's proficiency as a gunner."<sup>2</sup> Whereas some British warships did not fire at targets once in three years, Captain Broke trained his men on the guns every day for one and a half hours and twice a week he had ball practice both of big guns and musketry. Any man making a bull's-eye got a pound of tobacco. It was his custom suddenly to heave an empty cask overboard and order the first gun that could be brought to bear upon it to sink it—quite an irregular sort of fellow it may be noticed. And now see the result of all this training in action.

On an afternoon of dreamlike beauty, on the 1st June, 1813, "the *Shannon* with her foresail brailled up, and her maintop-sail braced flat and shivering, surged slowly through the quiet seas, while the *Chesapeake* came down with towering canvas, and the white water breaking under her bow." "On board the *Shannon* the captain of the fourteenth gun, William Mindham, had been ordered not to fire till it bore into the second main-deck port forward. At 5.50 it was fired." At 5.53 "the men in the *Shannon's* tops could hardly see the deck of the American frigate through the cloud of shivered and splintered wreck that was flying

<sup>1</sup> Gentleman's letter in *Naval Chronicle*, 1813.

<sup>2</sup> James.

across it. The quarter-deck of the *Chesapeake* was clean swept by a storm of round shot and musket balls. Man after man was killed at the wheel including the fourth Lieutenant, the Master and the boatswain. "Six minutes after the first gun had been fired the *Chesapeake's* jib-sheet and foretop-sail tie were shot away," and "at 6 o'clock the two frigates fell on board one another." Broke then "stepped from the *Shannon's* gangway rail on to the muzzle of the *Chesapeake's* aftermost carronade and thence over the bulwark on to her quarter-deck followed by about twenty men." After a struggle the quarter-deck was cleared, when up on to it rushed the Americans from the main-deck. "Captain Broke was still leading his men with the same brilliant personal courage he had all along shown. Attacking the first American who was armed with a pike, he parried a blow from it and cut down the man; attacking another, etc., etc." "At 6.5, just fifteen minutes after the first gun had been fired, and not five minutes after Captain Broke had boarded, the colours of the *Chesapeake* were struck."

Losses: *Chesapeake*—61 killed; 85 wounded. *Shannon*—33 killed; 50 wounded.

"Beyond question, Broke's men were far more skilful in the handling of the guns; but this was only one of the factors which went to make up the victory."<sup>1</sup> Naturally. Still, it was a prime factor,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These extracts are taken from Colonel Theodore Roosevelt's account in Clowes' *History of the Royal Navy*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Shannon* scored 362 body hits to the 158 hits made by the *Chesapeake*.



and this précis of a fine story has been given just to make that very fact quite clear.

The battles between Suffren and Hughes in Eastern waters must also be put to the credit of British training. In strategy and tactics Suffren was always the better man, yet he never once won, because, in sheer training (i.e. seamanship; the art of handling ships in combination; fleet drill, in fact), Hughes was his master. Suffren had always depreciated fleet drill, but fleet drill ended by depreciating him.

Agincourt, won essentially by the application of new tactical principles, owed its completeness and brilliancy to marksmanship; i.e. to training. Neither in their lineage nor in their skill in the tournament was there much to choose between the military virtues of the French and English men-at-arms. On this occasion the spirit of the French ran high; the English certainly thought they were going to be beaten. And small wonder! Ten thousand islanders (6,000 archers; 1,000 knights and men-at-arms and 2,000 to 3,000 infantry) were confronted by 50,000 Frenchmen. The French attacked and had all the advantage of the initiative.

“ When from a meadow by,  
Like a storm suddenly,  
The English archery  
Struck the French horses.” <sup>1</sup>

Result: English losses—13 men-at-arms. French losses—5,000 knights of noble birth killed; 1,000 more taken prisoners. An indefinite but enormous

<sup>1</sup> Ballad of Agincourt.



number of men-at-arms, infantry and cross-bowmen killed and wounded.

Frederick the Great owed some of his finest victories to training (i.e. to perfect drill; lines formed from column of route without confusion, gap or overlap; arms handled with rapidity and precision: volleys fired as if the triggers of a battalion had been pulled by one forefinger). His Army was capable of marching right across the front of the embattled enemy and of then deploying and rolling up that enemy's distant flank before they could conform to his movement, which, by the way, is precisely what our own infantry did at Elandslaagte. Here, also, the root of the victory must be sought for in the idea, but this idea had to be carried out by the agency of soldiers and it must be remembered that, as his opponents would be working on interior lines, Frederick dared not have adventured (any more than our infantry Commander at Elandslaagte) had he not possessed confidence in the marked superiority in quickness and handiness imparted to his troops by their training. His famous oblique order attack was still being practised when I joined the Army, and has been the means of drawing down more curses upon my head than a youth of this new, polite world is likely to hear in his life-time. We used to advance in echelon from the right or left of a line, whereby one flank was refused whilst the other outflanked the enemy. So the matador fascinates the bull with his gaudy flag whilst he manœuvres himself into position to destroy his lumbering adversary by one desperate lunge. The "oblique order" was the highest perfection of drill in action. So

long as its adversaries trusted also to training, it triumphed.<sup>1</sup>

In all history, the cleanest-cut case to be put to the credit of training seems that of the Spanish, Libyan, Numidian, Gallic and every other sort of species of mercenary who fought under Hannibal during the second Punic War; and be it understood that in praising the training of the Carthaginian troops I detract in no wise from the undying fame of the greatest of the Carthaginians, a fame not second to Napoleon's, than whom no Commander in the whole of history has owed more to the heroes he had the privilege to lead.<sup>2</sup>

Hannibal, crossing the Alps into Italy, got there with 20,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry and a few elephants of whom only one survived the December frosts. Starting with these at his back he went near to destroying the proud Republic of Rome which, a few years previously, had mustered over 700,000 conscripts. What number of these were actually thrown into line of battle against Hannibal no one now knows. We are told of enormous superiority of force. We believe that at Cannæ the two Roman Consuls offered battle with 90,000

<sup>1</sup> Yet, whenever the French brought fiery human souls against these clever combinations carried out with clockwork puppets, the oblique, and every sort of order, very quickly resolved itself into the order of devil-take-the-hindmost. *Vide* Chapter on the *morale* of Armies.

<sup>2</sup> Anyone anxious to pursue this point and to realise the incalculable assistance it was to the Corsican to be able to base his calculations upon the indomitable spirit which animated each or any French detachment should read (if he can read crabbed Austrian German) that admirable work, *Geist und Stoff*, by C. von B.—k.

legionaries of whose lives Hannibal took toll to the extent of 50,000. We get a glimpse of the Romans standing at bay in their own country against this band of voluntarily enlisted professionals with 21 legions (over 200,000 men), of whom some 80,000 directly faced Hannibal himself whilst 20,000 remained to cover the everlasting City from a *coup de main* in case he evaded or overthrew the forces opposed to him in the field. We know that later on the Republic was so far put to it that she had to create a Legion of liberated slaves,<sup>1</sup> and those who will consider this act in all its bearings, political, social and military, both at the moment and for the future, will gain some idea of her desperate straits. The facts seem at first sight incomprehensible. For the Roman name stood high. What a testimonial had not the famous Pyrrhus granted the legionaries in perpetuity! Only sixty-three years before the meteor star of Hannibal rose sinister over the marshes of the Campagna, Pyrrhus saw the Legions form line to the front from column of route after they had crossed a river and, astonished, had exclaimed, "In war, at any rate, these barbarians are not barbarians": or again (when he saw the Roman dead lying with their wounds in front), "If these were my soldiers, or if I were their General, we should conquer the world." The organisation of the Roman Army was excellent. The composition of the type of legion encountered by Hannibal, with its *volites*, *hastati*, *triarii*,<sup>2</sup> had been scientifically thought out.

<sup>1</sup> Jahns, *Heeresverfassungen und Volkerleben*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Hastatus* wore a breast-plate, brazen greaves and a brazen helmet with a plume of black or scarlet one and a half feet high. His defensive arm was an oblong shield and he carried

Cavalry, slingers and light-armed auxiliaries were apportioned with method and with ingenuity. The supply, transport and ordnance services were rudimentary according to our notions but advanced beyond anything until then witnessed by the world. Discipline, considering the conditions, was wonderfully good. "Rome's greatness," says Ratzenhofer, "depended upon the solidarity of her people with the State." Direct action by a section of the citizens was at that epoch unthinkable. The Roman character was naturally disciplined and lent itself not only to making laws but to observing them when made. I have said "considering the conditions," and here we must rub our eyes and wonder if we are awake when we reflect that at the outbreak of war these famous Roman Legions took the field with less military training and fewer chances of applying military discipline or gaining military cohesion than our pre-war Territorial forces.

In peace-time, the two Legions for each Consul were levied fresh each year; i.e. they would consist of one year's service men instead of as in the case of the Territorials, four years' service men. During their year they were often not embodied at all. They were, in fact, very much a paper organisation; much what our Territorial Force would be if they were compulsorily enrolled on the outbreak of war, without having had the chance of practising any preliminary battalion or camp training. They would have learnt to handle their arms and, in the majority

a cut-and-thrust sword and two javelins, one light, the other massive. The Triarius carried a spear instead of the javelins.—  
POLYBIUS:

of cases, would have acquired a little skill voluntarily, as school cadets, from some ex-legionary of the wars. Of course, a legion embodied throughout a long war by degrees became professional. Of course, also, for a long time after a war, the legions, though freshly raised, would contain veterans in the ranks of the *Triarii* or sometimes perhaps even amongst its *Principes*. Just so our Territorial Force did still contain a sprinkling of veterans trained in the South African War as late even as 1914. But, in normal times, the old compulsory service Militia were half-trained; a different force in that respect from the voluntary service legions of highly-trained, long-service professionals created afterwards by Marius as an instrument of Empire.

So the Roman Armies facing Hannibal at the beginning of the war were well organised, moderately disciplined and collectively untrained. Except that they were compulsorily enlisted, had no annual fortnight in camp and had only a quarter the length of service, they were very like our pre-war Territorials. But our Territorials used to be told once a week or oftener that they could neither march, shoot, nor obey orders, that the whole Force was a "farce" and that they would take to their heels at the sight of a foreign uniform; whereas the Legionaries were patted on the back by what corresponded in those days to the *Daily Mail*, the Military Clubs and the Flappers.

They did consider themselves fine fellows; very much so. Not yet had they encountered the Numidian Horse. The cloud of dust upon the flank of the line of march drawing swiftly near and discharging a shower of javelins ere it sparkled out

into a row of glittering lance points. Yes, down there by the Ticinus the Romans first felt fear : they felt—they recognised—their masters. Till then, their *morale* had held up its head under every trial. The whole of the earlier history of Rome is one running comment upon the boldness and self-confidence of her soldiers, no matter what the odds. Arms of those days offered an immense margin for *regular practice* ; i.e. for professionalism : they offered small margin for *new ideas*—for the shattering surprise of needle-gun versus muzzle-loader. Always excepting the elephants. The Punic equivalent to Napoleon's massed artillery was the charge of a hundred elephants in double rank. The solid earth trembled beneath the onrush of these monsters. Empires, too, they trembled like aspen leaves in suspense as the enormous mass of bronze-clad Tuskers, maddened with wine and incense, bore down upon the field at a long, shambling trot. From each mighty chest projected a gigantic spear, and flashing steel scimitars were lashed to the ivory tusks. Indigo painted ears cocked forward, writhing trunks smeared vermilion, tusks festooned with entrails, cleaving their way through the cohorts, the elephants of Hannibal transfixed the young soldiers in horror until they were transfixed indeed by the rain of fiery darts pouring down from the leathern howdahs.

Here was the great set piece of Carthaginian tactics—the idea—the invention. Whether in Sicily, Africa or Spain, the manœuvre was ever to draw on the enemy ; to envelop them and pen them in, until, jammed together in that awful crush of battle, they could hardly use their sword

arms, much less open out a passage. Then the Mahouts, dressed like Indians<sup>1</sup> and crowned with diadems of feathers, lifted restraining hooks from their monstrous chargers. Urged on with raucous cries in that strange elephant language still in use though its origin is lost in primeval mists; kicked violently behind their blue-stained, flapping ears; "Invincible," "Victory," "Thunderer," "Swallow"<sup>2</sup> and all the Tusker company began, with many a shrill trumpet, slowly to advance. How small and weak the legionaries must have felt as they faced them: and then came the crash: trampling faces into smudges with their feet, smashing chests with their knees, transfixing with their tusks, strangling with their trunks, obliterating, disembowelling, dismembering; on swept the elephants; so passed the wrath of Baal over the stricken fields of war.

The war galley and the war elephant were prime factors in the tactics of the Carthaginians. Only, in Italy they were wanting! The Romans had command of the sea,<sup>3</sup> the elephants had died of cold. These priceless creatures brought from India across Egypt via Gibraltar to Spain and thence by

<sup>1</sup> They were, actually, Indians except in Egypt. The Indian elephant also was generally used, being braver than his African relative.

<sup>2</sup> Actual names of war elephants unearthed by Flaubert.

<sup>3</sup> Note here an instructive point; one of the very few in which modern civilisation has altered a fundamental war factor. The Carthaginians started with absolute command of the sea. The Romans, starting from copies of a Carthaginian galley, created a navy during the time of war and then by boarding tactics wrested away from Carthage naval supremacy. How nearly did submarines make history repeat itself!



some miracle of effort over the Pyrenees and Alps where, amidst glaciers and precipices, the startled chamois beheld again the Mastodon, and so, through terrible battles with hill tribes: leaving a trail of huge carcasses to taint the air of pine forests for months; they had perished and one only, only one, emerged upon the Lombardian Plain. Better had it been for the bold little band of invaders had they never learnt to enlist the brute force of nature in its most terrible manifestations to aid them in the battle. No surprise superiority could be theirs. They were in the position of modern troops campaigning against spearmen when they run out of ammunition and have to meet cold steel with their bayonets: they were in the position of the British General who has based his plan upon a tank attack and finds he has run out of petrol.

The leader then? Yes, he is a prime factor, but here I am writing only of the leader's instrument, the Army. Were we to speak of Hannibal it would be with awe; awe of what he did, for we only know for certain of one thing that he said.<sup>1</sup> Of Hamilcar, his father,<sup>2</sup> it has been written, "I saw him go by in his great cloak, with his arms raised, towering above the dust cloud like an eagle flying beside the cohorts; at his very nod they closed up or rushed forward; the crowd swept us towards one another; he looked me in the face. I felt a chill in my heart

<sup>1</sup> When he heard a sophist explaining the art of war to a royal personage he remarked, "It is all very clever, but it is all nonsense."

<sup>2</sup> When, at the age of twenty-six, Hannibal became Commander-in-Chief, "the old soldiers thought they beheld the youthful Hamilcar once more."—LIVY.



as though a sword had pierced it.”<sup>1</sup> This was the blood and breeding of the hero, and has not Napoleon himself declared, “It was Hannibal, not the Carthaginian Army, who made the Republic of Rome tremble at its gates.” Hannibal stood as far above Alexander the Great as Napoleon stands above Charles XII.

When Hannibal already led armies, Alexander had been gone but one hundred years. Doubtless, the Carthaginian often spoke of the great King and admired his prowess as we to-day admire Napoleon. But of those three names of dread and wonder, a Trinity of War Gods, Hannibal’s looms largest. Alexander inherited an Army made for him by his father. His men were Europeans, the enemy they overthrew Asiatics. Eliminate fire-arms<sup>a</sup>, give us the good old weapons; a British division to-morrow, with the right sort of leader at their head, would repeat the performance of the ten thousand. Napoleon we know and his genius. Yet, until we wore out the spirit of his men, they towered everywhere like Gods above the dull slaves of Feudalism they encountered. No such fortune was Hannibal’s! If ever it could be said of mortal leader, alone he did it, that might be said of the Carthaginian. Only, it can never, never, never be said!

• We British should be the last to deprecate leadership. For is it not a fact that out of a population numbering a quarter of the inhabitants of the globe, we could in 1900 dig out only an old man; one small old man: survivor of unhappy, half-forgotten wars: one out of 400,000,000 to bring

<sup>1</sup> Flaubert.

purpose and energy to bear upon our troops who were wandering along, sheep without a shepherd, towards that Valley of Humiliation which borders, it may be remembered, upon the Valley of the Shadow of Death. There was no one else to do it but Bobs; little Bobs; but he himself could not have done it without foothold and an instrument. There was the nation standing firm behind him; in front of him there was the Army eager above everything to be used.

Despite every wish to give full weight to the genius of the Commander, we must fain recognise that there are immutable bounds set to what any individual can achieve. We know what a Lee can do against the good, ordinary General; yet—there are the appointed limits—as Gettysburg showed. A thrust is well-timed and deadly; the over-tasked blade breaks in the hand of the master. The stroke remains a master stroke; *it did not penetrate*, that was all! Records we have, indeed, in plenty of Europeans meeting and defeating Asiatics outnumbering them ten-fold, twenty-fold. The greater their number, the more they got in one another's way, the more of them were killed. But the series of victories in which Hannibal, between the Ticinus and Cannæ, killed or captured in battle 120,000 Romans<sup>1</sup> and in the fifteen years of his Italian campaigns not less than 300,000—these victories were won with a mixed Spanish, Lybian force of veteran infantry 20,000 strong and 6,000 Numidian cavalry supplemented and expanded as the war went on by auxiliaries certainly not so good as the legionaries. A soldier can hardly write of these victories and

<sup>1</sup> Jahns, *Heeresverfassungen und Volkerleben*.

defeats as simply as the history books which smooth away all complications in one glib sentence by saying the second Punic War was a contest between the individual genius of Hannibal and the combined energies of the Roman people. The Armies had something to say to the decision, and those two Armies were of totally different temper and complexion. We have seen that the Roman legions of that period were, at the outbreak of a war, well organised, moderately disciplined and quarter trained. They were raised by compulsion and, therefore, it is safe to suppose that (allowing for the martial type of population evolved by Roman traditions and Roman education) one-fifth of them would rather have stayed at home. The Carthaginian mercenaries were, as citizens, immeasurably the inferiors of their adversaries. "The thief expelled from his tribe, the parricide wandering about the roads, the criminal pursued by the Gods as the author of sacrilege—all who were desperate or starving—strove to reach the port where the recruiting officer of Carthage was enlisting soldiers."<sup>1</sup> Against this we may take it that their organisation was extraordinary, or they could not have marched

<sup>1</sup> "The Carthaginian Army was an assemblage of the most opposite races of the human species from the farthest points of the globe. Hordes of half-naked Gauls were ranged next to companies of white-clothed Iberians, and savage Ligurians next to the far-travelled Nasomones and Lotophagi. Carthaginians and Phœnici-Africans formed the centre; while innumerable troops of Numidian horsemen, taken from all the tribes of the Desert, swarmed about on unsaddled horses and formed the wings; the van was composed of Balearic slingers; and a line of colossal elephants, with their Ethiopian guides, formed as it were a chain of moving fortresses before the whole Army."—HEEREN.

from New Carthage in Spain to the plains of Northern Italy ; crossing the Pyrenees and the Alps ; subduing and incorporating whole provinces by the way ; in the five months occupied by the transit. This feat alone stamps Hannibal as a magician and his Army as a miracle. Discipline was stern. It was death to drink a cup of wine in the Carthaginian Camp, wherein " the order and silence which reigned throughout were alarming." But it was in training that the best armies of the Carthaginians excelled. The troops were unmercifully drilled. Swiftmess in execution and cohesion of shock were the ideas, but of the detail, even the German pedants and book-worms can tell us very little. Finally, the men were volunteers. Whatever their former crimes, however low they had sunk, each of them loved war, otherwise, why not choose some other way of escape from the vengeance of God or man than the Army of Hannibal ?

Take the battle of the Thrasymene Lake. The Consul Flaminius lay at Foesulæ in his camp. Hannibal trailed his coat close by and drew him out of his covert in hot pursuit. The road along which Hannibal seemed to fly ran between rocky hills on the one hand and the waters of the lake on the other. As the head of the Roman pursuing force was about to debouch into the open it was held up by a detachment. At that moment the main body was charged in flank by the bulk of the Punic Army. That Army had not passed through the defile, but had lain in ambush on the heights whence they had watched the legionaries march in column of route across their front. Was there no reconaissance ; were there no flanking patrols ?

If so, the training of the Romans was one degree worse than seems probable. Were the subordinate ranks of the Carthaginians able to let these light-armed detachments almost step upon them without betraying themselves, or did they manage noiselessly to capture or kill every one? If so, one more point to the credit side of the training of the force. Anyway, we all know the result. The Roman Army was wiped out of existence.

Simple—is it not? Just the sort of trap one party of Baden Powell's scouts might lead another into. Any ordinary schoolboy could conceive the clever trick! Yet, stay. Is there not some one who has said, in war all is simple, but it is the simple that is difficult? Yes—the same man who said, "It is enough to tell a French soldier a thing is difficult to find it is quite easy."

I have marched miles upon miles with a Japanese division following a Russian division along a narrow road between a river on one side and a mountain-side covered with brushwood on the other. Why was there not a new battle of Thrasymene? Was it because there was no Russian Hannibal? Well, certainly there was no Russian Hannibal. Yet, if there had been he could not have fought over again the battle of Lake Thrasymene because his troops were not fit to carry out that staggering coup. There were no troops in Europe in 1914 fit to do what the troops of Hannibal did for him at the Thrasymene Lake. The pick of our British overseas battalions; a certain number of French Colonial battalions; a few Gurkha battalions or the trans-frontier companies of some Punjabi regiments; otherwise none in the world.

At Majuba, in 1881 a mixed detachment scaled at night a lofty, rugged height whence, when day broke, they saw the Boer laager at their feet and saw, too, that they had taken the enemy's entrenchments in reverse. The idea attributed to our General (it was never given to the troops, so no one can say for certain) was that we were to remain thus hidden about a mile from the Boer right flank, behind it and overlooking it, until a force attacked them in front when we would rush down, take them between two fires and roll them up. A very pretty plan, quite on the Hannibal lines.

Before our very eyes, the unsuspecting Boers lit their fires and drank their morning coffee. Before our very eyes patrols mounted their horses, their wives bustling about them as they left the laager and rode out in various directions. One of them passed beneath us at close range. Half-way round the hill they rode chatting gaily, and in another minute they would have been gone—when suddenly, bang, bang, bang—from our lines. One Boer horse killed. The rest galloping away with their riders crouching down to offer as small a mark as possible to the wild hail of bullets which followed them. The whole Boer camp in a turmoil like a hive of angry bees and the projected battle of Lake Thrasymane had gone wrong! And yet, some of these British soldiers were of the Carthaginian type; long-service professionals, although it is fair to say it was not they who began the shooting. Sir George Pomeroy Colley would have brought off a second Thrasymane Lake victory had his troops been as well trained as were those of the Carthaginian Leader, for he would, at Majuba, have saved

his country the South African War of 1899-1902.

To turn and take up their position at night so that none of the country people should see them and give them away—to get into their correct alignment in the darkness amongst rough and broken ground—to have such knowledge of the contours of the terrain that not a gleam from a shield, not the careless raising of a lance should betray them—to remain glued to the spot for hours, motionless, and, finally, to see the enemy marching past them within bow-shot and yet not one man out of 20,000 make one sign: there was high training grafted on to stern discipline—there was a specimen of “nerve”!

Think of it. The legionaries marching rapidly in column of route; the great plumes of their helmets rising and falling in measured cadence as they swing gaily along to the rhythmic time beat of their flutes in all the jovial excitement of an Army in pursuit. And there, crouching in the brushwood, the Carthaginian veterans, still as stone, tense as drawn bow-strings, watching, waiting in a sort of agony, the signal of their Chief. Hark! From the head of the pass a sound comes borne on the wind, a clash as of iron on bronze, the distant yell of battle! A sudden convulsive stiffening movement passes along the trailing length of the Roman column, the ranks begin to close up, the officers are running to their posts—and then—oh! see, for it is a sight for the Gods, the fierce array of Carthage swoop down! Supple as a chain of iron and as hard; swift as a volley of arrows; solid as the phalanx of Macedon. The silver bucklers gleaming, the



dancing of the naked sword blades, the thunder of the Captains, and the shouting. The tremendous impact of steel upon steel as the shock falls full against the flank of the legions. Awhile these struggle in a sort of bewilderment to form front against the terrible onslaught. Brave men grind their teeth—hurl the *pilum*—strive to free their sword arm from the crush of disordered comrades who impede. Awhile the *Triarii* stand yet shoulder to shoulder and shout to the youngsters to be steady. Too late. The Militia in armour feel themselves but sheep in wolves' clothing against the lightning dash and cohesion of the Punic professional soldiers. Prayers arise to Jupiter Stator, the Stayer of Flights—in vain. Panic flies eagerly from rank to rank; to each Roman she whispers that here he is over-matched. The legion wavers; a shudder passes through its mighty frame as a nameless terror never felt before freezes the life blood in its veins: it totters—it is riven—it breaks—it is lost—we turn our eyes from the rout—the slaughter—the blood-soaked silence of the stricken field.

Fables arose. They said amongst themselves, "The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon." We understand better than before how next time the Romans heard the trumpets sounding the assault and saw the waving standards, the plumes, lances, bucklers, and breastplates glittering in the sunlight; saw the whole serried mass advancing marvellous and formidable; we understand how fear drained the heart of the legion of its blood and forced it in agonised humility to recognise its master and overlord in that polyglot crew of adventurers—Numidians,



Lybians, Gauls, Lusitanians, Campanians, Etruscans, Umbrians, whom singly, they singly, would have spurned beneath their feet—but who, collectively, were trained.

“ Amen ! ” the pious student may exclaim, “ but, if it *be* so, why do you shun the light ; why work like a mole under the ruins of the ages ? Hannibal is half myth : the *Shannon* ; the *Chesapeake* ; Majuba, too, are fading into legends. You yourself are not dead yet ; not yet ; you played your part in the very latest thing in wars : why give both France and the Dardanelles the go-by ? ”

My reply is simple. Training counted for more when men depended more upon themselves. Spears, javelins, longbows, pikes needed a lifelong apprenticeship before a militiaman could pass muster as a regular. The Welsh Archer could shoot half as far again, twice as fast and three times straighter than the French bowmen or the Genoese cross-bowmen. Before the war I have seen a raw Territorial battery make good practice on Salisbury Plain. No regulars, who had devoted years to the business, could have gone fifteen per cent. better. The ancient world pinned its faith upon the veteran, and small wonder ! After Cæsar was murdered Cicero writing to Atticus, the Senators writing to one another, do not trouble their heads about the hundreds of thousands of half-trained Territorials : the people they worried over were “ the veterans ” : how do “ the veterans ” feel about the stroke that was struck in the Forum ? Whatever are “ the veterans ” going to do ? The issue proved them right. The young legions raised by the republicans couldn't put up any sort of fight at all against the

old soldiers from Dalmatia, Gaul and Spain. I have spent study in trying to find out why, and I am certain the main reason is that, for instance, the magazine fire-arm is much more easily handled than the longbow; the howitzer than the catapult; the bomb than the javelin. In no other way can be explained the successes of Spartacus with his gladiators against organised, disciplined legions. The gladiators were individually better trained.

Never in those ancient days could we have heard it said as military writers say now, "1866 was won by the needle gun"; "1870 was lost by the French artillery." The latest date on which it can be claimed that training made a real hit was the date of Mons and of the first battle of Ypres, when the Germans were led by the terrific rapidity and precision of the British musketry into mistaking our professional marksmen for machine guns. That is the greatest compliment anyone can nowadays pay a man—mistake him for a machine! From Ypres onwards trenches and barbed wire fastened their paralysing grip upon the field. Movement died away and with it went the best half of the value of training. From that date war sank into the lowest depths of beastliness and degeneration. The wonder of war, the glory of war, the adventure of war, the art of war all hung on its shifting scenery. For years the Armies had to eat, drink, sleep amidst their own putrefactions. Bit by bit the old campaigner's memories and young soldier's dreams were engulfed in machinery and mud. In the higher spheres intuition, nerve and quick decision were about as much use as a cavalry regiment in a barbed wire entanglement. In the lower spheres our rank

and file who, for generations, have had a tradition of skilled marksmanship behind them, came down to barbarism—to bludgeon work with bombs! Training was at a discount; there was a big premium upon numbers!

## CHAPTER VIII

### NUMBERS

At the word "numbers" the politicians pricked up their ears. So then a battlefield was only another sort of ballot box. What asses they had been to let those dull soldiers impose upon them with their grand word "Army"! They would form a Dardanelles Committee of the Cabinet. Gallipoli was an amphibious sort of place they would make all safe by appointing Colonel Hankey, of the Marines, to be their Secretary. Elections had shown them how victories should be organised; the walls of Constantinople would go down to the tune of "Numbers will tell"—  
"The weight of numbers"—"The majority has it"—  
"Carried by acclamation"—"*Vox populi, vox Dei!*"

But there were several points about numbers which were overlooked both at the first war meeting of the Cabinet and at the Dardanelles Committee afterwards.

(1) There is no use having the numbers if use is not to be made of them. Every one must understand, for instance, that numbers cancel one another if they pull different ways.

(2) Supposing the numbers to be united, they must be planked down. To bury them in a napkin is to lose them. Clausewitz says, "The first rule is to enter the field with an Army as strong as

possible." This sounds so easy! It is not at all easy: it demands nerve!

Was the whole of our Expeditionary Force of six Divisions sent off to France complete, as had been intended, the moment it was ready? No, it was not. The nerves of several very important people gave way and it was not sent.

Was our Army of 70,000 men sent to overthrow the great military Empire of Turkey and occupy its capital "as strong as possible"? No, it was not. Nerve was needed to spare another 20,000 men from the defence forces of the United Kingdom. Nerve, we must suppose—a little nerve, was needed to release the East Lancashire Division and Cox's Indian Brigade from making Cairo considerably safer than London so that the landing at Gallipoli might be made "with an Army as strong as possible." But no: that Army was not on any account to be "as strong as possible"; the Army was to be just "big enough," the "big enough" being based (as it turned out) upon fallacy. England and Egypt between them had the numbers and bottled them up, dealing them out grudgingly, in a slow, even, just-too-late succession, afterwards to be successfully met by the somewhat *less* slowly arriving Turkish reinforcements. Had our rulers studied Clausewitz they might have "entered the fields" (of France and Gallipoli) with Armies "as strong as possible"; but, as it was, we did not!

(3) Suppose for the moment that the advantage of numbers is with us, that our numbers are united and that they actually "enter the field"—what then? Are "majority" and "superiority" equivalent terms? We know that in war they used not

to be so; that, at the time of the Jacquerie, one highly trained Knight in armour of proof could take on several hundred badly armed peasants. Are they then—are strength in numbers and strength in efficiency tending, under the working of education, and machines, to become equivalents? This is a question of life and death, for the numbers of our present generation are past praying for. You cannot increase the size of your grandmother's family by taking thought.

Let us see. What with plebiscites, referendums and other inventions of the Evil One, the numbers boom is so much in evidence just now that a solitary quotation should suffice to show the trend of modern thought. M. Geraud, writing in the *Echo de Paris*, in February, 1919, says, speaking of the League, "They talk of disarmament; there is one arm which cannot be suppressed, now that Armies can be improvised: the numerical superiority of a people." Quite true as a fact, but was his inference true—the inference that the military domination of the Continent by France was out of the question? Was it true? Perhaps; but not, I think, solely or even mainly, on account of shortage of numbers, or because it was correct to say that Armies could be improvised.

Armies *cannot* be improvised; minorities *can* dominate; but there is every excuse for M. Geraud, or for the thousands who agree with him in the events of the late war and in the attitude of many of the Generals during that war. I have heard them myself, with my own ears, declare with emphasis, with passion, that the only way to win the war was to, "kill Germans." But in trench warfare,

it was impossible to kill Germans without killing just about as many British. So we get back to butchery, to numbers being equivalent to victory. Clearly, as manœuvre was impossible, and as three-quarters of Generalship was therefore useless, numbers and yet more numbers were the sole recipe! Probe this thought a little deeper. Trench warfare arose out of the numbers on each side. But a "nation in arms" poorly supplied with machines is a fleeting phenomenon of the moment. A future "nation in arms" will merely be so much additional fodder for the machines.

Fu Chien, Prince of Ch'in, boasted his Army was so enormous they could dam up the Yangtze River by throwing their whips into the stream: he was grievously defeated. Xerxes led numbers innumerable—to join the majority! Sooraj-oo-Dowlah and 68,000 men with an enormous river between them and the hostile Army of 900 Europeans and 2,100 Sepoys felt tolerably secure. Yet neither his numbers nor his position had the smallest influence on the result of the Battle of Plassey.

But Gideon, the son of Joash, despised numbers. When his Army got within range of the Midianite host "which lay along the valley like grasshoppers for multitude," he did not howl for reinforcements. No; he gave the order, "Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early for Mount Gilead; and there returned of the people twenty and two thousand, and there remained ten thousand." It was Home, sweet Home for two-thirds of his Army and the results are written in the Bible.

The Bruce, Henry II and the Black Prince were



men of the Gideon persuasion: at Bannockburn 25,000 Scots overthrew 100,000 English. At Crécy 20,000 English defeated 60,000 French. At Poitiers 7,000 English beat three or four times their number of French troops of the first quality.

As time went on the European tribes borrowed ideas and armaments freely from one another. The more alike they became in their methods the less scope was there for the great surprises of war. At Leuthen Frederick the Great was still able to beat 80,000 Austrians with 30,000 Prussians, at Rosbach to beat 50,000 French with half their number of Prussians. Napoleon at Arcola won with 13,000 Frenchmen against 40,000 Austrians, at Rivoli with 25,000 Frenchmen against 60,000 Austrians, and at Austerstadt with 25,000 Frenchmen against 60,000 Prussians. So it was ungrateful of him to make that phrase about Providence being on the side of the big battalions. He forgot, in making the phrase, his own—"It is not the men that count in war, it is the Man."

Yet, mark the pursuing Nemesis: sarcastic Nemesis, so tenacious, so mindful of our slips. As Napoleon amassed men, got together the big battalions, Providence (who cares nothing for phrases) turned him down. As the size of his Armies and of his units waxed, so did his star wane. Had the Grand Army been half the strength and composed of the troops of 1805, Napoleon would have moved with twice the rapidity; manœuvred with four times the confidence; and would infallibly have beaten the Russians to pieces wherever and whenever he met them. At Eylau; Wagram; Borodino; the Beresina; these big battalions made their first appear-



ances. The attempt to impose by masses—an attempt significant of the fatigue of Napoleon and of the using up of his trained troops—was sheer degeneration. But—as is well said by Colonel Ardant du Picq—when, in 1814, Napoleon, on his last legs, fought his star campaign, we hear no more of these barbarous bludgeon strokes.<sup>1</sup>

So the problem stands facing us fair and square—quantity *v.* quality. Do character and courage hold their own; or, are we going to put our trust in the fertility of our females?

Victory comes to the Army which is superior at the decisive point. To get there it is up to the Commander to make his enemy think that the bulk of his force is committed to an enterprise upon which he does not intend to embark (strategy); or, that the bulk of his force has reached a sector of the battlefield whereon he has really but few troops and no intention of using them (tactics). If numbers are unlimited there will be less call upon the Commander to exercise these ingenuities, for he can then be superior everywhere; actually so as well as in the mind of his adversary—superior that is to say in numbers.

If numbers are anything more than a factor—if they can be translated to mean “victorious force”—then our Armies, faced as they are by Africa and Asia, not to speak of Russia, are played out. But my belief stands firm that we own other fields than those of numbers upon which we can sow the seeds of a formidable Army. I hold that efficiency can,

<sup>1</sup> 60,000 Frenchmen against something like 300,000 invaders fight fourteen battles and win twelve victories in the space of thirty days.

must and will learn how to cope with numbers before numbers can overthrow efficiency. The true reason why the world has remained at a deadlock since Homer is that successive civilisations established and embellished by individuals are successively swamped by numbers. Released from external pressure (dread of rival powers) the subsoil (numbers) comes up to top and good-bye to the beauty of the garden. Lately I read a book, written in 1912, which started with a pronouncement of contempt for "mere numbers," and went on to say, "Nevertheless it must be admitted that the conditions, in warfare and in industry, of life to-day, as compared with life in past centuries, have increased the value of numbers and of a faculty of blind obedience, and have proportionally decreased the relative value of individual character. An Asiatic Army to-day is relatively more efficient."

There is some truth in this. Counting by rifles, low-grade Armies have become relatively more dangerous and it is the rifles which have made them so. Rifles, simple machines, easily grasped and manipulated by savages.

The fact of the matter is that we have just reached an epochal turning-point in the career of arms, a point where the Armies of civilisation have got to choose between making a big imaginative effort and getting clean away from the Armies of barbarism, or else—plod on and go down taking with them their worn-out civilisation. Up to a point the undeveloped races can copy; certainly up to the point where we stand now. We have to carry on into regions where they cannot follow us without themselves becoming so civilised that their Armies will no longer be

a menace. The world, in fact, will be Anglicised.

Militarily speaking, we are still working on in our war-worn, worm-eaten uniforms and have only used our machines and inventions to buttress moribund formations : therefore, the mechanical side of our Army has been growing at the expense of the human and romantic side of our Army : therefore, numbers are counting for more ; characters for less.

When a thing is unreal the life goes out of it. Cavalry has been dead as the dodo for twenty long years, though the people who look at the effigies in Whitehall or stuffed specimens in Natural History museums have not yet, in either case, tumbled to it. What about infantry ? Are they not too marching towards their grave in some battle of machines, due, perhaps, about twenty years hence ? Unless quality crawls up out of the sea in its submarine or traverses rivers and mountains in its tank ; unless heroes in bright armour are rushing by thousands in their roaring aeroplanes across the tortured sky ; the fate of Armageddon will depend on numbers, and numbers will not be with us.

We must fix our minds upon the thought that just as men seemed to be on the very point of obliterating the Man—up he got ; seized hold of an aeroplane in one hand and of a tank in the other ; plucked individualism out of the mud and set it once more upon its feet, in the open field, where numbers and blind obedience are going to have less and less of an innings against science and efficiency.

Outwardly the battle of the future will resemble battles which took place before the birth of Christ rather than those fields of sinister desolation and solitude where we have suffered. The area of the

conflict; the use of tanks and motors as the pivot of the forces where formerly elephants and war chariots manœuvred will have more affinity to B.C. 500 than to A.D. 1917.

The tank combines mobility, fire-power, shock-power, and armour. I do not see how the heavy artillery and the heavy munitions are to keep pace with them. I do not see how the infantry, either, are to work with them unless their swiftness is to be sacrificed. Therefore, there will be no infantry except escorts in cars: tank followers.

What an immense future do not these inventions hold out to the British? <sup>1</sup> The future beckons us on; the very same circumspect types who funkcd going Nap with their numbers on the Western Front and at Gallipoli are hanging on to our coat-tails. As Pasteur says to an obstructionist who might well have been a British official, "*Vous dites que dans l'état actuel de la science il est plus sage de ne pas avoir d'opinion?*" Exactly; it is more prudent to look wise and express no views. Uncomfortable fellows who press for progress have a bad time of it in London; but bad time or good time we must have prompt, bold, big changes as a result of our experiences during the war, or, it may so happen, we shall have bled and suffered and won, only to bleed and suffer and lose!

Can it be true that a British division is still organised as it was in 1914? That Cavalry horses still devour oats? That swords are being forged, scarlet tunics being embroidered in gold, and spurs being polished with plate powder? Why have we not had a manœuvre of a new division of tanks and

<sup>1</sup> *The Millennium?* pages 23, 24, 25.

aeroplanes trained to work together, say total strength 2,000 mechanics against a 1914 division of 20,000 horse, foot and guns; the capture or defence of some important city being the objective?

One invention do I believe might *at present* easily be barred by a common consent, which would be more binding than treaties extorted from fallen foes by holding a knife to their throats. If our Prime Minister were to approach every nation on the globe, civilised or semi-civilised, and propose to them that it be made a criminal offence, punishable by death, for anyone to experiment with, propose to make, stock or use poison gas, there is not one nation that would say him nay. Well; why does he not do it? Quick!

From inventions we get to inventors: from inventors to the rare beings who can grasp the scope and bearing of an invention; not an improvement, an invention. So long as an invention remains a brain wave its value can only be measured by a brain equal or superior to the wave. When one man tots up the sum of the contents of another man's brain we get a recognition by one intellect of another intellect. But a fly cannot recognise an elephant. A fly cannot even see an elephant although the elephant can only too well see the fly. There is no good, therefore, in being angry with the Jacks-in-Office who spurn the, to them, entirely meaningless maggot brought to them by an unfortunate inventor. They are congenitally incapable of visualising the imago or perfected creation which must one day emerge from that envelope. The higher a man flies the smaller does he appear to the man who cannot fly—unless he has the vision of genius.

## CHAPTER IX

### GENIUS

Genius? "Transcendent capacity for taking trouble" is the popular definition, and naturally so, for it tickles the self-conceit of Tom, Dick and Harry to think that they, too, by taking thought could add some cubits to their statures.

Judging by an interview published in the *Daily Mail* of 19th April, 1919, Marshal Foch is of the same opinion as Carlyle. "The stroke of genius that turns the fate of a battle?" says Marshal Foch, "I don't believe in it. A battle is a complicated operation, that you prepare laboriously. If the enemy does this, you say to yourself I shall do that. If such and such happens, these are the steps I shall take to meet it. You think out every possible development and decide on the way to deal with the situation created. One of these developments occurs; you put in operation your pre-arranged plan, and everyone says, 'What genius to have thought of that at the critical moment!' whereas the credit is really due to the labour of preparation done beforehand."

On the 23rd April, 1919, Sir John Monash, in private life a business man of Melbourne City, in public life the tenacious and capable Commander of the Australian Corps, followed suit. "Modern

warfare was not a matter of genius, or of brain waves. It was hard, slogging, methodical, matter-of-fact work."

When authorities so famous have slammed the door so violently in the face of genius some hardihood is needed by anyone who would reopen it, but the thought that the Marshal, like most great men, is modest and is anxious to disclaim any transcendental gift gives me courage. So I take the liberty of saying that although the outside public may often mistake what is merely the result of hard work for the stroke of genius, this does not itself exclude the genuine stroke of genius which fashions creations out of nothing without any apparent hard work. Nor do I think that Napoleon would have gone so far as his fervid admirer Foch, although it has been stated that his favourite work was a book of logarithms.<sup>1</sup> To me it seems that even in the most mechanical seeming battles of the late war of machines, the stroke of genius did occur and won those battles, although, very possibly, no higher grade than that of a Lieutenant-Colonel of Infantry may have been illuminated by its flash. For rank has no more affinity to genius than has laborious preparation. Marshal Foch put two and two together—as he now tells us—very effectively. In the case of genius, God puts two and two together in the subconscious regions of the being, and He does it more effectively.

There is no question here of a genius *for* friendship, or of a genius *for* finance, or of a genius *for* poetry, or of a genius *for* growing turnips. I am writing about Genius, the faculty; the intuitive

<sup>1</sup> By Sir Walter Scott.



perception ; the piercing power of comprehension ; the innate originality and, above all, the intrepidity which takes all these and uses them ; the intrepidity without which they would merely amount to imagination. That genius about which I write is made up of four parts : one part imagination, one part energy, one part enthusiasm, and one part courage.

Marshal Foch has shown the happy results of material calculations as employed (it must be admitted) against materialists. He says, indeed, in this same interview that the Germans "were great organisers. In this war they had no men of insight or genius." Later on, I will prove that no nation can at the same time be very highly organised and possess men of insight or genius. Meanwhile, let me contrast with this triumph of material calculation an affair which we have been taught by politicians, not by soldiers, to think disastrous from start to finish—and yet a stroke of genius !

Antwerp ! Did the men of plans and calculations, did the Allied War Councils or War Offices, realise Antwerp ? One or other of their laborious "If-the-enemy-does-this" forecasts must surely have fitted the actual situation pretty closely at various junctures in the opening phases of the war. Did none of those forecasts stress the need, the anxious need, the enemy High Command must be under to guard the right flank of their own Army against an outfall from Antwerp ? Or, had they pored over the map for as long as the Israelites wandered in the wilderness without grasping the meaning of Antwerp to the German right flank or the effect of the naval operations which might ensue if the Germans got to Antwerp ?



The truth is that Foch's game for dull boys, the game of "if-he-does-this-I-shall-do-that," had not worked in the field quite as well as it used to work at the Academy. After the first move or two the permutations and combinations had become too complicated. The strategical and tactical fields were no longer in orthodox order; they resembled rather a Rabelaisian game of chess where the board has a million squares and the pieces consist of a dozen Kings and Queens, a thousand Castles, ten thousand Knights and so many pawns that no one can exactly count them. Faced by this situation, our Allies lost their heads, shortened their line and thought of nothing but saving Paris; decided to evacuate Paris; pulled themselves together; gained the victory of the Marne; advanced to the Aisne; began to move via St. Omer to an attack upon Lille. The Channel Ports were at stake and with them the war. Dark was the outlook, when, of a sudden, the whole strategic field lit up to the bright flash of genius. One man had seen what hung upon our holding our ground—if only for a day or two—at Antwerp; one man had acted with all the force and swiftness at his command to enforce that view; one man had understood that, whether the fortress could be held or could not be held, the honour of England demanded that at least the attempt be made; one man had the courage to step fearlessly forward with what tiny force of raw troops happened by his own prescience and God's mercy to lie at his own disposal to show British uniforms on Belgian soil. Jealousy may have succeeded in hoodwinking the people to-day; the historian will class this feat of Winston Churchill's

as one of the two acts of intuition of the war. Public opinion lags ten years behind acts of genius like the purchase of the Suez Canal shares or the move upon Antwerp. Ordinary folk can only gradually absorb the truth from experts, and the experts are ashamed to expose the professionals. The more this *coup de main* of Churchill's is considered, the more vividly it stands out. No ordinary First Lord would have had infantry under his orders! As yet our people have not heard that tale of courageous, pertinacious struggle against Sea Lords and War Earls which took place before even a start could be made to form this Royal Naval Division—and then, scarce emerged from that combat, the Division themselves scarce clothed, Churchill handles them as if he were Napoleon and they the Old Guard; he flings the R.N.D. right into the enemy's opening jaws at Antwerp!

The facts are beyond dispute. The Marine Brigade of the R.N.D. entered Antwerp on the night of October 3rd; they fought on October 4th; they animated the Belgian defence; the 7th Division and the 3rd Cavalry Division didn't begin to disembark at Ostend till October 6th and, had the saving of Antwerp been left to them, it would have fallen a week earlier than it did fall; Ypres would have spelt another story; the Belgian main Army must have been scuppered and the Channel Ports would have gone by the board. Whilst this masterstroke was being played, clubs, offices and drawing-rooms were in an uproar. How indecent of a man in charge of the Navy to shove his oar into a land battle! Murder, my dear, sheer murder; the poor Marines were so young and raw, their

bayonets were tied on to their belts with bits of string—imagine, my dear, *bits of string*! Yet, in a good hour, be it said, string or no string, the R.N.D. saved the Belgian Army—and more than the Belgian Army—the Channel Ports—and more than the Channel Ports—the honour of our Arms.

Opposed to genius stand the men of logarithms, who, by their “if-he-does-this-I-shall-do-that,” attempt to exhaust the *cache* of chances which God keeps stocked far away in starland. Genius is God’s secret, that is all. Foch thinks he won the war because he “calculated,” as the Yankees say. He forgets that the Germans equally pride themselves on calculations. He either forgets, or he is too modest to tell us, that he has in him like a burning fire a passion for sheer fighting, a fire of passion which burnt up all his sums and figures when the moment came. But if the great Marshal had only told us this, we should have known what weight to attach to his “If he does this I shall do that.”

Anyway, let us take this “war of siege,” won—so the prize boy of the school tells us—by calculations, and compare it with another stroke of genius that failed. Only one condition do I make with my reader: namely, that he should first make a real effort to heave himself out of the “nothing succeeds like success” frame of mind. In time of war and under democratic rule there is no escape from the success test, I admit; but now that there is a sort of peace going on, let us get back to maps and common sense.

After Antwerp had saved the Channel Ports a state of stalemate ensued which is thus described

by the best authority, Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson :—

“ France became after the first two or three months a war of siege, and nothing else—no movements at all. We had some four years solid of siege work. There were many reasons for that, but two anyhow will probably continue to exist unless the League of Nations steps in. One was the enormous numbers employed on either side, which meant a great frontage—and the other was that this frontage was so great that one flank rested on a neutral and the other on salt water. That gave no ragged edge for either side to fasten on to.”

So there we have it. The soldiers who had become so obsessed with the thought of the frontiers of France that they would spend their pennies and their holidays bicycling over it ; studying its rivers, mountains, woods, roads, towns ; there they were at last, dreams come true ; camping on the familiar ground : unable to get away from it : their minds as well as their thoughts hemmed in by it ; Sir Henry Wilson's “ neutral ” on the one side and his “ salt water ” on the other the farthest horizons to their thoughts. But whilst they had been studying their battle-ground that was to be, science had been marching. Space had shrunk in relation to human activities. The sacred war area had somehow got too small. No matter : there they settled themselves down in the mud ; no elbow-room ; no outlet ; no “ ragged edges ” ; nothing for it but “ four years solid of siege work.”

Suddenly, once again that lightning flash of genius ! The dark horizons recede. The idea sparkles out that in war the great thing is to have battles—decisions : that, win or lose, the one great thing for either side is to get done with the bloody business : that if space has shrunk so that

the whole of France gives no ragged edges, then the real ragged edge might lie outside France, over the neutral hills and far away beyond. The Dardanelles !

I had written twenty pages to show to tempers now grown cooler that there was no other issue from that awful "four years of solid siege work" between the neutral and the salt water except via that same salt water to Constantinople. But I have reflected that it would be wiser to have a little more patience and leave the Dardanelles to those close-thinking students, the Germans, who, if they hate, will at least do so with impartiality. *Fas est et ab hoste doceri*, and I have no doubt at all of the result.

The Antwerp stroke was prompted by an imperative impulse to threaten the enemy's right, and to hold up his advance on the Channel Ports if only for two or three days. The Dardanelles move was calculated to save Russia by piercing a deep-sea, warm-sea passage to her heart, clean through the enemy's left. Both enterprises were efforts to get outside of an overcrowded area ; were inspired by genius and were worked from start to finish in face of an outcry from France. Yet, so true was the aim of these two strokes that, although the "four-years-of-solid-siege-work," "kill-German" school did all that men could to deflect them, each, during its time, did more than any of the great "set-piece" siege battles towards carrying the war on to victory.

Imagination forms one of the four parts of genius and has itself two clearly marked attributes : the one, fancy or the power of ornamenting facts as,

for instance, making the wolf speak to Little Red Riding Hood or describing the Battle of Le Cateau; the other, inventions; not fairy tales but machines. Inventions do not often make their first bow to armies on the battle-field. They have been in the air for some time; hawked about the ante-chambers of the men of the hour; spat upon by common sense; cold-shouldered by interests vested in what exists; held up by stale functionaries to whom the sin against the Holy Ghost is to "make a precedent"—until, one day, arrives a genius who by his imagination sees; by his enthusiasm moves; by his energy keeps moving; by his courage cuts the painter of tradition.

So long as a statesman is orthodox he is safe. Some infernal, uncomfortable fellow has put forward the notion that shock cavalry are obsolete. Away with him! A Secretary of State for War is not put in to try experiments! So the only windfall which came in the way of the War Office during the last few years before the war was spent on cavalry horses: not in machine-guns or howitzers; oh, dear no! on *cavalry horses*!

That the aeroplane was coming into its kingdom was almost as clear, in September, 1914, as it is to-day. The power of reason was not denied to the War Office: they believed the war would last three years: they strongly suspected that they ought to back their own opinions by committing the public to a really big programme of aeroplane building. But there was no genius there to see, to move or to strike.

In those first war days a scheme supported by Lord Fisher was laid by a young naval officer,

Neville Usborne, before the War Office; a scheme which seemed then to involve a big plunge. The demand was for ten million sterling, at once, simply and solely to lay foundations broad and deep for eventual supremacy in the air. The paper lay for some time on the table of the man who could have given it currency by putting his initial upon it. He was taken with the scheme; he passed it on with the remark that, although sound in principle, the amount was four times too much. Four times too much for what? Too much for the war? Too much for the Treasury? Too much for him?

Lack of the nerve which goes with genius was shown in another way on the other side. When the Germans made up their minds to go Nap upon the submarine, that was a bold decision. The prize might be the scuppering of British sea supremacy; the penalty might be war with the neutrals. The one thing there was no room for was half-heartedness. That was certain to fail in destroying Britain and to succeed in annoying the U.S.A. Whether as a question of lulling the British or of keeping neutrals in a good temper, equally the situation demanded a pause in the campaign until a big fleet of submarines was ready.

All these points must have been clear to the intelligent Germans. Then why so uninspired, so hand to mouth, so stupid? They had organised genius; put a strait-waistcoat on to it: not one touch of transcendentalism; that was what was the matter with them.

So much for the aeroplane and the submarine; now for the tank. By December, 1915, the whole of the western fronts of both armies were swathed



in barbed wire; movement was paralysed; the Generals on both sides were hanging on to their regulations as a blind man does to his dog; the last three years of the stalemate had begun. Then it was that the idea of the tank which had lain dormant since 1903, the date of the Royal Commission on the South African War,<sup>1</sup> began to bestir itself again in men's minds.

A fleet of landships had been let loose upon the realms of fancy by Mr. H. G. Wells; now men of faith and skill began to submit inventions and to urge action. Over there, in France, was the "hold-up"; over here were tanks "on paper" capable of breaking through "on paper." The tank, in fact, was still a scientist's plaything; a mechanical elephant had been drawn to scale by men of talent. The monster had been conceived but, before it could be born and waddle across no man's land to browse upon the barbed wire of the Germans, it had first to get through the wire of the bureaucrats of London; the barbed wire of the bureaucrats whereon fluttered still the poor rags once worn by dead inventors.

There had been no clamourings for tanks from the soldiers. No sort of prompting or support came from G.H.Q. in France. The War Office and Admiralty were calmly and contemptuously sceptical. Under ordinary statesmen the tank would have remained a departmental toy for twenty years; a generation would have passed away before

<sup>1</sup> Index to Vol. II. Minutes of Evidence, Report of the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa: "Shields, steel, placed on wheels, equipment of infantry battalions with, advocated, 13,941 (page 112). (Witness: Sir Ian Hamilton.)"



it could have developed into a line of battle tanks. But there was a man not yet ostracised by the oysters—a man of genius—a brave man—whose two and twos were pulled together elementally—not by logarithms. He knew by the awkward way in which his journalistic and political admirers shook hands with him that they were carrying stilettos up their sleeves: he only had to read to be able to see with the inward eye rows of pious folk praying on their bended knees to the Devil that he might slip: he plunged bald-headed into a tank with the purse of the public in his hand. With money entrusted to him and to his advisers for good and profitable and safe investment by that testy Mrs. Britannia, he, on his own individual responsibility, undivided and entirely unshared by those “responsible advisers,” gave imperative orders to a sober, scientific person to make a huge, steel-clad monster to gambol and snort before himself and his friends over the banks and braes of Hatfield Park. The sober, scientific person agreed, but the sum was a tidy one—£70,000 to wit. Our Genius had a wife, a son, a career, some expensive tastes including two sweet little daughters; in what queer street would they all have found themselves had that monster jibbed or bolted at his trials? Imagine Winston Churchill’s position before a Royal Commission, trying to explain how he, First Lord of the Admiralty, came to embark naval funds on a business clearly pertaining to the War Office. He would have been alone; his “responsible advisers” chuckling in the background; not a signature, no single scraplet of writing to implicate them.

But plenty of this sort of backing, I daresay :—

"I regret that owing to pressure of current work these interesting papers have lain on my table for a month. Having no *military* experience, I am unable to offer any opinion upon them.—B. F." <sup>1</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

"I venture to submit that we have enough to do in carrying on our own business without trespassing upon Lord Kitchener's preserves. The tank crank is becoming a nuisance : birds of a feather, etc. ; let him join the ' flock ' at the War Office. Suppose we take up tanks and they turn turtle—it is we who will find ourselves in the soup ! My reasoned opinion is that the consideration of tanks ought to be postponed until the termination of the war, but that, as dangers lurk also in a downright negative, we should refer the whole question to a mixed committee of sailors, soldiers and manufacturers. By this method at least we shall gain time.—K. F. M." <sup>2</sup>

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"In principle, I find myself in entire agreement with pre-note, but, as to the Committee, would it not be best to let it be composed of officials ; manufacturers appearing only as witnesses ? Departmental Committees can be controlled, but a mixed committee might lead to publicity ; publicity might lead to the Press ; the Press to pressure. *Experto crede !*—Q. P." <sup>3</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

"I concur, but I hope it will be clearly understood that in so doing I express no opinion as to the desirability, the feasibility, or, I may say, the propriety of these tanks. The one thing I deprecate is haste. Three courses are open to us : (1) a departmental committee ; (2) a mixed committee ; (3) no committee ; and whichever course we pursue I foresee we shall regret it.—W. S." <sup>4</sup>

Lest anyone should be scandalised by my daring to publish State documents, I would explain that, having seen cartloads of this sort of stuff written

<sup>1</sup> The initials are those of Mr. Bottle the File.

<sup>2</sup> The initials are those of Mr. Keep the File Moving.

<sup>3</sup> The initials are those of Mr. Queer the Pitch.

<sup>4</sup> The initials are those of Mr. Wait and See.

by the type of Government servant *who succeeds*, I have been able to conceive them for myself. No one who has been through the mill but knows that the British bureaucrat has managed to transform inertia from a negative into a positive force. Bureaucracy is one huge "sit tight" club. In every Government Office should be hung up a text from the great Clausewitz: "It is even better to act quickly and err than to hesitate until the time of action is past"; and at the other end of the room, "He who makes no mistakes makes nothing."

Howbeit, our genius did produce his eighteen A1 tanks; and now came the question of, using them. A new weapon is put into a Commander's hands. Is he going to stake his country's fortunes on the dark horse which has run so marvellously in the trial; or, is he going to hedge and have another, and this time, a public trial? For the first method he must collect a number of the new engines and make them the backbone of his battle; for the second, some of the new engines must be attached as auxiliaries to an independent scheme. For the one, nothing less than 500 tanks will do; for the other, the fewer the better. I merely put the case. To be a fair critic a man should *know*. I do not know the ins and outs of the game played during the third phase of the battle of the Somme between Joffre and Haig on the one hand, and the politicians and Nivelle on the other. There may have been good grounds for giving away the tanks: the fear of the enemy getting away; or some or any motive greater than, and perhaps independent of, the motive of getting full value out of a great surprise. So a few tanks were dribbled out and the cat made

its escape from the bag. It seems a pity. The past had its inventions and when they coincided with a man who staked his shirt on them the face of the world changed. Scythes fixed into the axles of the war chariots; the moving towers which overthrew Babylon; Greek fire; the short bow, the cross bow, the Welch long bow and the huge balista; plate armour; the Prussian needle gun; the Merrimac and Ericsson's marvellous coincidental reply. The future is pregnant with inventions, but where is the use of the invention birth-rate of the United Kingdom heading the world roster when the Exchequer will not put the new-born ideas out to nurse and the General Staff won't adopt them? If we are going to be as cautious as in 1917, we may live to see the disinherited children of our brains marching against us in strange uniforms, commanded perhaps by those Asiatics who can copy and fight though, thank God, they cannot invent.

The year 1914 marks the end of the old order. We are living in a new age and behaving as if Haldane had reorganised our army after the war instead of before it. Our General Staff seems to be saying, "Let some of the other nations show the way and then, when they have tried it, we will chip in."

That way lies perdition. The only chance for a nation like ours is to keep on leading with a strong inventive originality; otherwise we shall be run over and trampled underfoot by the imitators. In the last part of this book I mean to apply my theories to our present old-fashioned army. Many of our best soldiers will disagree. "Our Army," they will say, "has come magnificently through a

Who can answer? . . . I will. The guiding Dæmon of England resides in the tenacity of Mister Thomas Atkins. If only he could get a genius to lead him, the whole world would have to jabber English. And why is Thomas Atkins so stiff? His breeding and his pride in it, his family, county, country traditions; in a word, his patriotism.

## CHAPTER X

### PATRIOTISM

Organisation gives the Army form—existence; discipline lends it force—cohesion; training imparts self-confidence—teaches it to inflict more loss than it suffers. None of these touch the heart of an Army. To say, as has been said, that the Japanese were carried to victory by sheer discipline, is to say what may seem to be, but isn't. I can quite understand how largely discipline must have loomed in the eyes of one who at Port Arthur saw the defile of battalions march in sombre procession against iron and concrete forts. But, in the open field, where individuality could spread and assert itself, there was another side to the medal. To show genuine enthusiasm for the enemy when they defended themselves gallantly; to make light of a bad wound lest the next day's battle might be missed; to be so anxious to meet the Russian bullets that officers had to impress upon their commands that death was not the object of a battle—all these show that some transcendental motive had gripped the rank and file.

There can be no real Army without some form of discipline, and yet discipline alone does not make a redoubtable Army. Discipline makes a stubborn defence. Discipline will bring the attack up to fixed-

sight range. Discipline lends the faint-hearted a mask with a good face painted upon it whereby they will seem to keep their countenances when faced by an ugly situation : it does not, and cannot of itself, create fortitude in a nation ; energy in an Army.

A shell bursts within a foot of a poor, undisciplined Japanese coolie, who has been carrying *bentos* of rice to the firing line. He escapes by a miracle and flings a stone into the smoking crater saying, " Take that, you Devil ! " The Japanese officers used to boast—no—used to declare with reason that after two or three weeks' drill any one of their common rickshaw men would be ready to run a neck-to-neck race with a veteran of the Yalu straight for the enemy's guns. This was not, could not have been, in virtue of his military discipline or training.

Napoleon, materialist in many ways, was yet always ready to doff the martinet's cocked hat to the invisible—the incalculable. Discipline, yes. That was a goodly attribute. Training, organisation, equipment and supply, how well they were thought out and applied ! But amongst those very Grenadiers so petrified by discipline that each appeared a mere duplicate automaton of his fellows ; amidst these faultlessly aligned figures seeming to be nailed to their precise place in the ranks,—were hearts that had throbbed in unison with the wild cadence of the Marseillaise. Hearts of oak, say we—but hearts aflame were at the service of the Little Corporal. Burning within the breasts of the old Guard ; driving forward through the mitrail, "*les hauts tambours-majors aux panaches énormes*," was the cult, the religion of *la gloire*. Advancing like a

pillar of fire by night and a pillar of smoke by day these shapes strode forward at the head of the old Guard, and no mortal power could stand against them—nothing was ever to resist them—until the white clinging snowflakes of Russia had congealed the last drop that had flowed through these valorous hearts. Take the battles of Jena and Auerstadt—French against Prussians. Before a shot was fired Napoleon had so manœuvred his Army that, by *his* victory, he stood to win infinitely more than an ordinary general could have won by an ordinary victory. But, even so, victory had still to be won and the Prussians did not realise their bad strategy during the battles. Both battles were, actually and tactically, straightforward, hard, front to front, rough and tumble struggles. The Prussian troops were beautifully drilled, thoroughly disciplined; whilst their parade movements and their performance of the firing exercises had filled all contemporary experts with admiration. The Generals meant fighting; the regimental officers did fight, as to-day, admirably. The Staff and departments were, according to the light of those times, well organised although their supply arrangements were clogged by that very feudal formalism which Napoleon was engaged in destroying.<sup>1</sup> Last, but not least, that secondary moral force, the martial pride produced in an Army by a memory of Rosbach and Frederick and by a consciousness of their own material efficiency, stood every bit as high as it did before the

<sup>1</sup> The troops were absolutely starving in the midst of abundance. Requisitions were put in to the responsible local authority, the great Goethe. No answer was returned and the troops continued to starve.



Battle of the Marne. The Prussian Army was indeed enormously, almost uncannily, self-confident. It snapped its fingers at the Grand Army, and lo, with one kick, the Grand Army sent it flying.

The fruits of this debacle may fairly be ascribed to the magic of Napoleon's leadership, but not the debacle itself. Auerstadt was a worse, altogether more infernal, defeat than Jena, and Auerstadt was won by the stout Davout and his famous Third Corps. To read the memoir of Davout is to understand that the organisation, discipline and training of the Prussians was met by organisation, discipline and training scarcely, if at all, inferior to it, plus something else, something swift, imponderable, winged. The Prussians could not face the French. Was it haply that something which enabled the man of destiny to overthrow Army after Army—Nation after Nation—until only a handful of British aristocrats stood between him and the immensity of the Imperial idea?

At the Battle of Lake Regillus there appeared two forms of more than mortal stature, mounted on white chargers, leading the chivalry of Rome. The warriors to whom that vision was vouchsafed became forthwith invincible, and so it is now and will be evermore. The immortals still mingle sometimes in the earthly conflict and not always do they choose the side of the big battalions. It is the spirit, the spirit that quickeneth.

An Army is something more than a marching, shooting machine working in the grip of a Draconian Code. Obviously, the troops must learn to shoot and to manœuvre; the officers to command, the rank and file to obey. Practice in those exercises and

habits begin to bear fruit during the brief course of a summer's camp and the longer the camp goes on the richer will be the harvest. But, if there is any truth in what has been said so far, it is certain, not only that Napoleon's pronouncement on moral values was true when it was made, but that, from now onwards, it will tend to become truer. During the last three-quarters of the twentieth century, in fact, the moral factor will transcend the physical, not as three to one but as four to one.

Moral forces may take a back seat at Committees of Imperial Defence or in War Offices; at the front they are put where Joab put Uriah. There is a steady bias towards material in every administrator's mind; there is a steady bias towards numbers in every politician's mind, so that, at last, they forget the soul. But things forgotten do not thereby in any sense cease to exist: they are still there waiting till time gives them their revenge, like a latchkey left lying on a dressing-table whilst its owner, heedless, far distant, whirls with his inamorata in the mazy evolutions of the valse.

The latchkey to success in war is a sound moral outfit, and by "war" I do not refer merely to the clash of armies, but use the word to denote the instinct of every nation to expand like an oak stretching her branches to the sky striving against the undergrowth to make *Tuum Meum*.

When, earlier in this essay, genius—ideas—inventions—imagination were placed at the head of the winning factors in *war, campaigns* would have been a better word to use. A campaign is quickly over, war is everlasting, and as everlasting qualities are to be found only in moral fibre, so also the means

of salvation for a people, whether in war or peace, must be sought in their persuasion that they do possess brains, hearts, laws, experiences which warrant them before God and man in playing some definite part in the development of the world.

The moral outfit of an army is the same but with a difference. We have no word in English to express the moral outfit of an Army and so we borrow the French words *morale* or *moral*. But, although we put them into italics, they still retain a savour of the English "moral" which we apply to matters of virtue or goodness. The simplest way out of it, (for we must have a word to express this special military significance) is to take the word *morale* out of its italics and adopt it into our language.

The morale of an Army is compounded of enthusiasm for the national cause and of belief in its own arms. The value to an Army of a righteous cause is no new discovery. William the Conqueror manoeuvred for years to put Harold morally in the wrong before he began to move his Knights; he succeeded and robbed Harold of his Bishops before the game began. William, in fact, made much the same use of Harold's oath on the relics of the saints as Northcliffe did of Kaiser William's solemn engagement to protect Belgium. The Papal Bull secured by the art of William the Conqueror was worth to him five thousand coats of mail, and the loss William the Conquered suffered by the scrapping of his signature was five million fighting men—no less! The materialistic Germans of 1914 deliberately, quite deliberately, put geographical and technical advantage above clean consciences; had they not done so they would have won.

Throughout History religious or philosophical men have constantly been perceiving truth; i.e. the reality of God, and have even from time to time succeeded in gaining a theoretical acceptance for their view from the ordinary Pagans who form what is called the Ruling Class. Yet, let the Storm arise, and brute instinct reasserts itself. In 1914 the German Great General Staff had reckoned by all the most profound calculations of science they must win, provided they started off on a dishonoured cheque. Had there been one righteous man; one prophet like Isaiah; in Germany he would have pointed out to them that they would thus raise the powers of the unseen world to fight in the enemy ranks—invisible forces—incalculable forces. But since 1871 the Germans had, bit by bit, divested themselves of their belief in things they could not see, smell, taste, or touch. They wrote about them and spoke about them; their Field Service Regulations paid lip service to them: they had far less belief in them than we had. In other words, they were doomed—or damned; it doesn't much matter which way you write it.

Although our William the Norman took more trouble to conform to the ethics of his time than did William the German in his, we need not conclude that there has been any slump in moral values between A.D. 1066 and 1914. Ideal wars have been fought in the interval as, for instance, the Crusades; also, there have been armies like those of Frederick the Great, whose grenadiers cared no more whether they were in the right or in the wrong of it than the Zulu impis when they sallied forth at Cetewayo's bidding to wash their spears. There have, in fact,

been ups and downs; yet, take it all in all, as civilisation has advanced, the morale of Armies has drawn more and more of its strength from conscience, and so, politicians also have been more and more forced to cut their best friend, the Devil, when they meet him in public. Leaving ourselves outside the question, we can see now that although the leaders of the Germans had coldly determined to sacrifice the chivalry of war, and even its rules, upon the altar of practical expediency, they had to try and conceal their crime from the rank and file of their own Army. It was all very well to take the honour and chivalry of the old Teutonic knights and nail them up dead, as a gamekeeper nails vermin to a tree; there is always an advantage in getting a free hand: but it would not do at all if those simpletons, Michael and Fritz, were to suspect what had happened. So the Great General Staff had to pretend that the shooting of occasional batches of innocent civilians was a plan for reducing the sum total of human misery; that it was, in fact, a philanthropic act; that (as Mr. Wells puts it when vindicating the Bolshevists) they "did on the whole kill for a reason and to an end"; that the Kaiser had only anticipated the French when he broke the neutrality of Belgium, etc., etc. These persuasions were effectual, for the German Army could never have made its very fine fight for *Kultur* if it had not genuinely believed that the German soldier was a better human being as well as a better fighter than the French or the Russian.

Hence propaganda. The devil, unfortunately, is immortal. Whenever God takes a step forward; look out! For sure as Fate the devil is at His elbow. Like the battle between big guns and armour, there's

no end to it. Armies develop consciences—curse them! A dope must be invented for the consciences! Propaganda, as inverted patriotism, draws nourishment from the sins of the enemy. If there are no sins, invent them! The aim is to make the enemy appear so great a monster that he forfeits the rights of a human being. He cannot bring a libel action, so there is no need to stick at trifles. So he boils down his dead comrades for their fat: horrible! He is excommunicated. To kill him becomes a meritorious act. See-saw; so we go; and the problem facing our statesmen to-day is how, in peace, we may best knit together those beliefs of our rank and file in their own country and thus, in war, reproduce that flash like a naked sword which came in 1914 from the invincible soul of our Army. For that we must turn to Patriotism.

Patriotism! What is it?

Patriotism is an outfit of recollections, aspirations and ideals peculiar to the bulk of the inhabitants of some region; or even, as in the case of the Jews, held independently of any existing city or land. But I think there must be a territorial basis, if not in actuality, then at least in old sagas or dreams, and that it is this which makes the distinction between patriotism and religion. Religion is the patriotism of an angel: she wishes to extend the Kingdom of Heaven by prayer, by sacrifice. Patriotism is more earthy in its texture and yet retains, or should retain, a wish to do good at its heart. The patriot is not out for oil, he is out for "live and let live." The cleaner cut the area of the native land, the stronger the patriotism, as we see in the cases of islands like the United Kingdom, Japan, Switzer-

land and Ireland. This makes me feel that Mr. Wells for all his brilliant intellect and all his righteous judgments has never fathomed patriotism. The idea underlying "the enlargement of Patriotism to a World State" will remain clever nonsense, until, that is to say, his own Martians make their long-deferred attack upon our planet.

Almost always patriotism is founded on a common history illuminated by acts of more or less mythical heroes and expounded in the traditional style by mothers and schoolmistresses. Once grafted on to the young idea the sentiment is exploited by ballad makers and singers; by writers, artists and politicians. Hence arises a public or national belief; in the case of England, a belief in a God of twin forms: (1) John Bull, a jolly old farmer, all for sport, hospitality and fair play: (2) Britannia, a severe and heavily-armed female who is not going to stand any nonsense. John Bull and Britannia are every bit as good as the Roman Gemini and stand broadly for freedom, go-as-you-please, my-house-is-my-castle, and voluntary service as against, for instance, the German creed of order, obedience, my-house-is-the-property-of-the-State and compulsory service.

Patriotism is like a plant whose roots stretch down into race and place subconsciousness; a plant whose best nutriments are blood and tears: a plant which dies down in peace and flowers most brightly in war. Patriotism does not calculate, does not profiteer, does not stop to reason: in an atmosphere of danger the sap begins to stir; it lives; it takes possession of the soul.

Inherited traditions of sacrifices endured, of tyrannies overcome; a present determination that



these sacrifices, these victories, must and shall be lived up to and maintained, plus common associations with the mountain and vale, the river, forest, plain and city of the actual native land—these are the emotions which awaken suddenly from years and years of slumber to the call of the tocsins of war. Sedan binds together the Hanoverians and the Prussians; also, in another way, the French aristocrat and the French Socialist, lending by a common and yet how different a memory, a touch of passion to the patriotism of two great countries. So, too, the mighty Rhine bears on its bosom to each German a rich sentimental cargo of Rhine maidens, Loreleis, Rhine gold; precious unalterable possessions; whereas, to the French, the same river is an emblem of military conquests and glory; an emblem to which they still hold and, in holding, hold also France herself together. When Field-Marshal Foch arrived at Cologne and entered a room filled with British officers of high rank waiting to have the honour of being presented to him, he walked right past them as if they did not exist to the window which opened upon a wonderful prospect of the Rhine. Throwing it open, he gazed at the classic river as if he would drink it up with his eyes and then, stretching out his arms, exclaimed in a voice vibrating with emotion: "*Le Rhin!*"

Scottish women play their part right well. Where is the Scot with soul so dead that he does not accept the heritage bequeathed him by the Bruce when with his battle-axe he cracked the skull of "the fierce De Boune"? It happened a good while back, but your true Scot can still hear the impact of that blow. Or else; they may prefer to watch with the eyes



of their hero the seven times renewed efforts of the famous spider to forestall Messrs. J. & P. Coats and Co. with a web into which all the world must fall. Whichever way you take it, a Scotsman possessing family traditions of that sort has no excuse at all if he fails to get the better of less fortunately ancestored folk. He, of all men, is born with an old silver apostle spoon in his mouth. The banks and braes o' Bonnie Doon—the Gaudie “rinning”—still rinning—at the back of Bennachie—they are his, those lovely streams; they are his own ever-living waters in quite another sense from the Nile or Ganges which might seem more actually to belong to him; they slip away through the fingers of the actual sporting tenants as evasive as the snow-flakes which fall upon their surface: they are Scotch; they are absolutely ours.

A common dislike makes almost as good a basis for a combine as a taste held in common. In our wars against the French the propaganda used against them was their habit of toasting frogs just as, lately, against the Germans, the propaganda was their habit of roasting their fallen comrades for fat. The prejudices of race are as useful in keeping the rank and file shoulder to shoulder against the foreigner as its virtues.

In the days between 1791 and the fall of Napoleon, the Swiss, though militarily entirely overwhelmed, over-run; though they were given “resolute government” no end; came out of their ordeal more Swiss and less French than ever they had been. In the sphere of the spirit I think there is no process corresponding with the process of material absorption; i.e. a boa constrictor swallowing a donkey. When

Napoleon tried to swallow the Swiss they escaped quite easily by ignoring the verdicts of the magistrates set over them and by accepting tacitly instead the verdicts of other magistrates, outwardly simple fellow citizens, whom they, surreptitiously, had agreed amongst themselves to consider as their real rulers. But what's the use of danger signals?

If only we would look back a bit and think, we would see that although it is wrong to say that the Force which can kill a tyrant is "no remedy," yet it is quite true that "force is no remedy" against patriotism; on the contrary, it is a stimulant. Force cannot kill the legend of Tell or the legend of Charles the Bold. Swelled head is the Nemesis of success, and a swelled head turns naturally to Force; but if any coolness remains do not let us use it on patriotism. Free trade, fostering of native industries, etc., have been vaunted as solvents of patriotisms. There were many writers writing just before the war who prophesied that "reciprocity" could, and would, convert the inhabitants of Canada into Yankees. But reciprocity never got past a certain challenging double sentry; the ghosts of Wolfe and Montcalm.

Still, business relations, *Zollvereins*, are instruments, no doubt, and an enduring patriotism will usually be found to include some identical interest, shared by the patriots but threatened by foreigners.

Patriotism unites a multitude (1) in remembrance; (2) in danger; (3) in aspiration; (4) in the possessive mood. The more frequent the play of these sensations the more enduring the mood of the patriot. Therefore, patriotism needs time just like that velvet lawn in the quadrangle of Oxford which a millionaire

wanted for Harvard. Heredity—age—gives us an advantage. For us ten thousand memories, sad or splendid, mingle with the song of the thrush, the colour of the primrose, the scent of the sweet briar to give us higher guidance than busy common sense can offer in times of danger. Other races may take the destruction of the Legions of Varus as their lode-star—or the victories of the Revolution—or else they have been reared on tales of clan combats fought by gnome-like cavaliers clad in chain armour, and believe the cherry blossom to be more lovely than the rose. Well, let them hug their fond traditions and welcome! We have no quarrel with those worshippers of strange gods so long as they leave us our own altars unprofaned. But when they approach us in minatory guise and bid us bow down and worship in the house of Rimmon—why then we pull ourselves together and realise that, viewed in relation to these strangers, all those our countrymen we had imagined to be nobles and esquires, butchers, bakers, bankers, soldiers, sailors, tinkers, and tailors are just quite simply Britons. Yes, we pull ourselves together and say we are shoulder to shoulder here and that we have died by the million there and are ready to die by the million again sooner than abdicate from the mighty Empire of fact and still mightier Empire of thought bequeathed to us by our ancestors. Here is at the same time the touchstone and the whetstone of patriotism. All our love of country, love of one another, is as tinkling brass and sounding cymbals unless we are prepared to lay down our lives for them.

Once more, the winning quality in war is the

cohesion of all sorts and conditions of men brought about by the spiritual cement ordinarily called patriotism. The solidarity of a free people with their own free state. Where this exists it must manifest itself in the conduct of the Army; in the leading of the officers; in the devotion of the rank and file.

Seeing then the inestimable value of patriotism can we not intensify its force? We know that the quality is often lacking to people otherwise excellent. Take the Chinese. Work and output are preached to us day in and day out as the only true road towards national salvation. Well, the Celestials have been sweating their guts out for at least one thousand years; yet China seems further away from peace, comfort, wealth, happiness—not to say from setting a mark upon the world—than she was one thousand years ago. Why? The Japanese say, "Because she cannot breed good officers." Probably the Japanese are right, but as she breeds much better merchants than the Japanese their theory leaves something to be solved.

The fundamental cleavages between the character, "form" and outlook of the upper classes of the various nations—of the classes who travel about—has tended to conceal from mankind the close kinship existing between their lower classes. The cosmopolitan veneer with which all aristocracies are equally coated misleads in the one direction, whilst the fact that peasants are the guardians of national dress, habits and ceremonies leads observers astray in the other. But look into their hearts, and no gulf at all separates the German and British peasantry. Even the Turk and Chinaman are nearer to

us, *in that stratum*, than is generally imagined. I am not theorising here ; I am speaking from personal experience picked up by living in farmhouses in Saxony and Bavaria and by months spent in Chinese cottages. It is when you come to the men in the tall hats and frock-coats ; superficially as like as two pins ; that the contrast in ideals becomes startling.

Still, there is one very real variation in type between Chinese and, let us say, Japanese. Take one of those excellent, honest hard-working Manchurian farmers, or one of the commercially upright, high-principled Chinese merchants of Hankow and make him into a Lord High Admiral, and he loads shell with saw-dust instead of expensive high explosive and pockets the difference. Now take the commonest little cheating Japanese shop-keeper and he would far sooner die than do that !

Had China possessed real patriotism instead of a false spirit of vainglory, Japan could never have conquered those millions by a few thousands even though the eunuchs had expended the whole of the Naval Estimates in rebuilding the summer palace at Peking. The truth is that China has arrived at Mr. Wells' winning post of the enlargement of patriotism to a World State and has, in the process, lost both the patriotism and the State ! A big issue is utterly lost on the Chiraman ; he can't see the wood for the trees ; he can't see the State for the estate. These people may be conscious, and are conscious, of something pleasing to them in the society of their own folk as compared with foreign devils ; they are conceited and exclusive, but they won't risk a scratch to maintain the independence of this, to them,

pleasing social group. They will make sacrifices for a master, for a brother, but the idea of the State is beyond them. In the domain of statesmanship, they are a thoroughly mediocre lot. They can do small, ordinary things; they cannot produce even a few selected men, as the Japanese can, who will grasp and grapple with great principles. Therefore, China is not, in the proper sense of the word—a nation at all. It is a mere agglomeration of men and, being wanting in *moral force*, has no entity, no being, no power of progress. The Chinaman cannot credit a public functionary, a Mandarin, with decent motives, and he is right. Let philosophers enquire what the root cause of this vast fiasco—this huge blank wasted area on the globe may be—filled it is true with 400,000,000 human beings possessing good brains; good bodies; high individual principles and gifts all doing *nothing* to help on the world; let them enquire; to us, on the face of it, the immediate reason is simply lack of patriotism.

The period 1870–1914<sup>•</sup> incubated the ideas engendered by the Franco-German War; politically, socially, agriculturally, and industrially they grew up and led surely—quite surely—to the greatest war of all. The older historians are now proved to have been quite right in giving a greater weight and space to wars than to questions of politics or commerce; they were right, because, as we living men can see more clearly than our fathers, steps of progress, or retrogression, *are* punctuated by wars until we get to the fullstop or death of a nation, which also is always a war. During that epoch 1870–1914 it was my fortune to see many lands and peoples, and it seemed to me then clear that the

Prussians, Bulgarians and Japanese grasped the extent of their individual responsibilities towards the Fatherland more fully than other races. When Von Moltke was asked in 1908 what in his opinion was the first qualification for an officer of the General Staff, he replied, "The first qualification ever since the day of my namesake has been not so much the possession of any quality as the absence of a quality—the quality of ambition. When, with us, an officer of the General Staff is a climber—well—we have no further use for him." Every one of the Japanese Commanding Generals in 1904–1905 was entirely free from any thought of self. I cannot say as much for the European-trained officers of the General Staff; but of the old-fashioned Commanding Generals I do say with complete confidence that it was so. The Bulgarians were not on so high a plane as the Japanese, but, still, they resembled them curiously in many ways and especially in the burning, sleepless quality of their patriotism.

In Great Britain patriotism did not seem to stand on the German or Japanese level. This was because, with a system of voluntary service, the State was not working upon the patriotism of its citizens all day and every day for all it was worth as, for instance, by conscription. Apparently, we had buried our gifts in a napkin, but, as I wrote in an essay on Voluntary Service at that time, "the vital current still flows strongly under the surface where, for anything we know to the contrary, it may be filling vast reservoirs"—and it was! Those were the days when millionaires and profiteers used to write to *The Times* deploring the fact that our older universities did not train our youth to business!



But, praise be to the Lord of Hosts, Oxford and Cambridge, the one by its instinct and tone, the other with the whole force of its intellect, have stood out against the standards of Capitalism and the counting house and exalted against money bonds the bonds of gentle culture and of a common birthright. The ideal of our great universities has been rather the Public Servant than the Commercial Traveller. Many British officers used to serve, not for their starvation pay, but for love of their country and on the off-chance of being able to defend it with their lives. Some of them were deep-thinking, assiduous men of business, drawing hundreds a year when they might have made as many thousands elsewhere. They were aware of the fact and remained well satisfied with the hundreds. Our British Samurai, in fact, men of high honour and noble tradition, were bound up with the life-history of their race and of their regiments. They deliberately, indeed joyously, faced up to a life of adventure, roving, action, exile, and poverty because it satisfied and reposed their souls, because it redeemed them from the sterility of a Chinese career—a life of sheer egoism. May they rest in peace these hundreds upon hundreds of younger comrades whom I have inspected on countless parades and field-days, have trained at Hythe and at the Indian Schools and have served with in so many wars. They sleep where the waters of the blue Ægean reflect a land very beautiful with lilies and all sorts of flowers; they sleep in France and Macedonia; in Palestine where Richard Lion-hearted and their ancestors fought before them; in Africa-East and Africa-Southwest, all over the world their graves stand as monuments of honour



to their race. For they are dead : so many of them are dead that as a class they have passed away. Alas ! for those thousands of gallant souls whose spirit was as a mirror wherein could be seen reflected the glory of imperial England. They are gone : so I thought—and then—I saw Woolwich and Sandhurst !

I saw Woolwich and Sandhurst, and do ! the sun was rising again over the dark horizon of our islands—the sun—and all was well with the world. The new boys are the old boys to the life ; the same type, the same class, the same ideals—only, there are many more of them. France has lent us five Officer Instructors to each of our Colleges ; they are picked men who have made their mark in the war and are now making another mark upon Woolwich and Sandhurst. What do they say of our lion cubs ?

They say that whether from the moral point of view or from the physical point of view they did not know, till they came here, that there existed anything quite so fine as these two bodies of English cadets. From the intellectual point of view and from the educational point of view, on the other hand, they could not, so they declare, have conceived so great a waste of good stuff as was exemplified by those same cadets.

Be it so ! Let the rest of the world have the brains provided we keep the character. If our Empire is to endure let us rejoice in our possession of a coming class of officers who are so strong and so sane in body and soul that they astonish some of the best soldiers of France. We have, we must have, a singular system of education if we produce speci-

mens so singular; and, in effect, it *is* so singular that no foreigners and only about one-hundredth of our own people really understand it. The essential difference between British patriotism and, let us say, German patriotism, is that the former aims at spreading the standards of the good Public school-boy; i.e. the ideals of fair-play, of playing the game, of telling the truth. Its object is not merely to aggrandise Britain, to paint the map red, but to get backward or less fortunate races to learn the value of a cricket ball and of an honest umpire. Many of those who go out into the utmost parts of the Empire could not, or would not if they could, put their ideals into words, but, *they act on them!* Our patriotism lives because it is not narrow or selfish, aiming solely at gaining for one country and that its own country. The first time this high ideal was betrayed was at Versailles. May it be the last. Patriotism which is narrow is bound to fall in the end, just as Dives who forgot Lazarus is bound to fall. These ideas lie behind Wells' mind, but, marvellous as are his gifts of expression, he loses touch somehow here:—I think he was not at a public school and his doctrinaire socialism leads him astray. The same thought is behind Nurse Cavell's "Patriotism is not enough." She saw plenty of German patriots, but she had not the knowledge public schoolboys have of the other kind. In my chapter on the "Application" of my theories to our new-model Army I shall have a word or two more to say on the cultivation of British Patriotism.

## CHAPTER XI

### APPLICATION OF HIGHER ORGANISATION

Shelley, after discoursing to a fair lady upon the beautiful flirtations of mountains, rivers, oceans, and whatnots, suddenly pops out with his—

“What are all these kissings worth  
If thou kiss not me?”

I am quite sure the lady agreed with Shelley that they were no d——d use at all unless they led up to an application, and so I will go right on with only one word of warning; let the machinery be of the best, but, make it as good as you like, you can't get away from the Man. Taking our ramshackle, patchwork constitution as it is, a great Prime Minister can still work wonders with it. By making a couple of simple changes in Mr. Lloyd George's outfit he could afford, as he cannot now afford, to dispense with good machinery. Or else, take Mr. Asquith. Imagine a hard-working Mr. Asquith with initiative, and you have imagined a P.M. who could easily do without aid from the mechanism of a modernised staff.

There is no way of illustrating personality except by personalities. Every one knows something of the examples I have chosen; either we must get some one better than either or else we must improve our machinery.

As to the machinery do not please imagine that the splendid model created by Haldane between December, 1905, and June, 1912, remains abreast of the times. Although still in good working trim it stands, in relation to what should by now have been launched upon the Empire, exactly as a 1910 motor-car does to a 1921 issue by the same firm. But there is no new output. The War Office contains clever men but—no Haldane.

Until, in December, 1905, Haldane emerged out of the blackness of a record fog, clutching his famous seals of office, the War Office was without form and void. The Army Council had expanded Arnold Forster's 5,000 men into 80,000 and had some forty field batteries to send with them. This was the best they could do in the way of an Expeditionary Force. Haldane came like the first chapter of Genesis. By skilful reorganisation he doubled the *available* number of rifles and guns without adding one to their *actual* number, and then went on to create, out of a chaos of Militia and Volunteers, a great special reserve for the Expeditionary Force as well as fourteen new divisions of Territorials supported by one hundred and fifty Territorial batteries; he made officers' training corps, and many other things as well, and spent less money! That splendid Army has served its purpose.

To-day the purpose is quite different. No balance of power to redress: no defence of hearths and homes. But those were the objectives of Haldane's organisation!

What do we want to-day? My ideas on the subject will come out as we go on. All I would suggest just here is that we want smaller, more

compact, more mobile, more highly machined formations, each sufficient unto itself, capable of bringing the last word of science and skill to bear upon areas containing less skilled, less powerfully armed, people. Also, that something drastic must be done to weld together the old Services of Army and Navy and to see that the new adjuncts of air, under-sea and tanks do not break away from the main organisation and group themselves into *separate* Services.

To reorganise the Army alone would be like patching shoddy with broadcloth : the defence fabric would not stand it. As we get on with the Army it will become evident that the Navy, Air Service, Committee of Imperial Defence, and Cabinet are equally crying out for repairs.

The intense vitality of military tradition, in so many ways an asset to an Army, is a drawback in this one way at least—that it predisposes soldiers against change. But now that so many civilians have been through the mill there is a chance that we may for once take time by the forelock and meet half-way the unpleasant surprises with which the Versailles Treaty is pregnant.

For my part, I say, now is the time. Ideas, like fluttering birds, are hovering on the dim thresholds of life. Why wait? So, listen to me! Reorganise the Army from top to bottom; as well as, incidentally, the Navy and the Air Service. Were we each to live one hundred years longer we would not be likely to obtain a more lively experience of war in all its forms than that which some of us have survived. The hour is now: for energy directed by reflection; for foresight; for back-sight; for using yesterday's inventions.

Any military reorganisation should conform to certain set principles:—

(1) Power must go with responsibility.

(2) The average human brain finds its effective scope in handling from three to six other brains.

If a man divides the whole of his work into two branches and delegates his responsibility, freely and properly, to two experienced heads of branches he will not have enough to do. The occasions when they would have to refer to him would be too few to keep him fully occupied. If he delegates to three heads he will be kept fairly busy whilst six heads of branches will give most bosses a ten hours' day. Those data are the results of centuries of the experiences of soldiers, which are greater, where organisation is in question, than those of politicians, business men or any other class of men by just so much as an Army in the field is a bigger concern than a general election, the Bank of England, the Standard Oil Company, the Steel Trusts, the Railway Combines of America, or any other part of politics or business. Of all the ways of waste there is none so vicious as that of your clever politician trying to run a business concern without having any notion of self-organisation. One of them who took over Munitions for a time had so little idea of organising his own energy that he nearly died of overwork *through holding up the work of others*; i.e. by delegating responsibility coupled with *direct access to himself* to seventeen sub-chiefs!

Now, it will be understood why a battalion has four companies (and not seventeen); why a brigade has three or four battalions (and not seventeen).

Organisations are run by rule then; a rule whereby

from three to six "hands" are shepherded by one "head," each "head" in turn being member of a superior group of from three to six who are being wheeled into line by one. Fit this axiom upon any ordinary organisation and if it does not "click," turn down that organisation. Who of us has not in his time found himself, for his sins, a member of a committee of a dozen or even more? All equal—all pulling different ways—a body outside the laws of organisation—an amorphous mass—a bag of jellyfish—a hopeless instrument. The only chance the chairman has is to assume one or two general principles; to assume hesitation gives consent; and then to break up the meeting, *sine die*, into the typical working groups of from three to six. As to whether the groups are three, four, five or six it is useful to bear in mind a by-law: the smaller the responsibility of the group member, the larger may be the number of the group—and *vice versa*. That is to say, one N.C.O. in charge of three private soldiers would be too idle; one lieutenant-general in charge of six divisional generals would be too busy. The nearer we approach the supreme head of the whole organisation, the more we ought to work towards groups of three; the closer we get to the foot of the whole organisation (the Infantry of the Line) the more we work towards groups of six.

The Secretary of State for War has been described as being (under the King) the "very head" of the Army. That is the convention, but actually there are the Cabinet and the Committee of Imperial Defence above him, and it is easier to begin reorganisation at the top of the tree than set to work lopping

the branches. A Cabinet consists, now, of about twenty members, all nominally co-equal except that one holds a bag and that the others want to empty it. This clumsy machine is as much out of date as would be a mastodon in the Mall. During the Boer War it was already as dead as that mastodon. The country had never voted to put these twenty into power; the country had voted for the P.M. and for perhaps four or five of the best known of his adherents. Actually, the P.M. and his four or five notables did run the show; a very small group was really responsible for the policy; but this was irregular; the irregularity is now become a bad habit embodied in a form unknown to the constitution and, in short, we are being governed on false pretences.

Only two years ago the Army *was* the State, and it is more vital perhaps to the military forces of the Crown than to any other body of citizens that the supreme Direction of our native force (including "the forces" of the Crown) should cease to masquerade as a Committee of twenty and, in some form or other, should come out into the open. The way we are going at present is straight to the sham or ineffectual government which heralds and indeed justifies revolution. The Cabinet is too big for business, so it does not attempt governing or policy, but each Minister contents himself with administering his own Department. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister with a small band of picked adherents, what we should have called "favourites" in the days of the Tudors, runs the Empire. If we like autocracy, well, we have it: if we don't, the Cabinet should forthwith be reorganised.



The few words I mean to say on this subject will not be written down at random. I know something of its "Defence" and "Imperial" sides. I have attended many meetings of the C.I.D. and, in my four years' travel as I.G. Overseas Forces, I heard what impressions overseas statesmen had carried away with them. For what it may be worth my opinion is that the overseas Premiers will not for long be content to attend any hocus-pocus inner Cabinet; or Committee of Imperial Defence. They have no wish to find themselves seated in a small room with highbrows, talking "policy." They are business men themselves and when they come to meet statesmen they want to meet the actual "Government." They want to shake hands with the King and to transact business with the actual, responsible, governing body of the Empire.

Is it too much to ask that we should put our own house at least so far in order that we can say, "Gentlemen, here you are. There is no idea of treating you as strangers by calling any special or extraordinary committee to do business with you. What you see is our own Government Machine, just the same as yours; so now let us five nations, equal under the King, sit down and see how we can draw up regulations for better trade, communications and Defence."

The Cabinet of the future should consist of about half a dozen Ministers. If we have a working Cabinet of half a dozen of our best men, then our visitors from overseas would learn that we still carry heavy guns over here. As to the members I should say: (1) the Leader of that House to which the P.M. does not belong. (2) The Chancellor of

the Exchequer. (3) The Minister of Defence. (4) The Minister of Home Affairs. (5) The Minister of Foreign Affairs. (6) The Minister for the Dominions. (7) The Minister for the Dependencies.

Were I to enter into a full explanation of the foregoing paragraph I would have to write five more books and I am too old for the job. But to those who are young and have energy I would point out that we always follow Rome; that we are predestined some day to fall into an Empire of the East and an Empire of the West, and that already the time is ripe for India, Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia, British East Africa to be governed by one officer. So now, let me turn to my own subject, the Defence Minister.

The crying need of the moment is that the three fighting Services of the Empire should be placed under one Defence Minister, who will dominate and co-ordinate Sea, Air and Land and all that therein fight. He alone should have a seat in the Cabinet and the elements he controls must be administered by Under Secretaries of State. The defence of our Empire is surely a matter which must imply co-ordination between the Commonwealth—the Dominions, the Dependencies and the Motherland; and, unless that Mother makes a start by co-ordinating her own defence services, how in the name of common sense can she expect her children to embark their private capital in the old firm?

No one who has breathed even a gasp or two upon our astonishing whirligig can expect to take the bloom off fourteen *magnum bonum* political plums without raising Cain; no one politically weaned will feel hopeful that a Prime Minister who can work

his will with any man or subject by picking a small sub-committee, *ad hoc*, is likely to create a Minister who will have a huge power and will be almost as big, therefore, as himself. All the same the change will come. When it does we shall get our Defence Minister and, with him, our land, sea and air forces will become one and indivisible. The strategy and tactics of land and sea have been divorced for many, many years. Just at the moment when the younger generation of soldiers and sailors have begun to understand that the "overlapping, competition and waste"<sup>1</sup> which took place during the war between these two stranger bodies, the Army and the Navy, must never happen again and that sea and land services *must* by some means or another be welded together; just at this moment arises the Air Service and demands a share (which many of us believe should be the lion's share) in the new combine.

*The Times* issue of 21st January, 1921, discourses weightily in its leading article upon various suggestions for working the Air Ministry and, after urging that an independent portfolio be established for that Department, goes on to say, "But other courses have their champions, who see the opening for pressing their views which Mr. Churchill's departure for the Colonial Office presents, and are making the most of it. The most worthy of serious argument are those who advocate a Ministry of Defence, supreme over the Navy, the Army and the Air Ministry, and representing the three in the Cabinet. This may be the counsel of logic and symmetry. It is not, we believe, the counsel of common sense

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Major-General Brancker to *The Times*.

and practicability. In theory a Ministry of Defence may be admirable; but we believe that in practice it would break down, if only through the sheer impossibility of finding any one man competent for the mass of work which would fall on the unhappy shoulders of a Minister of Defence."

Yielding to no man in my deep respect for that Titanic institution, *The Times*; believing as I do in Northcliffe, Campbell Stuart and Wickham Steed—for how else indeed could I be saved—I must still affirm that this latest fulmination from our Olympus is of the nature of one of those rare nods of Homer rather than of the irrevocable decrees of omnipotence. In making the above quoted remarks *The Times* has bestowed its benediction upon a heresy which strikes at the very root of the principle of organisation. Let us see:

In 1896 I was Deputy-Quartermaster-General at Simla; then, perhaps still, one of the hardest worked billets in Asia. After a long office day I used to get back home to dinner pursued by a pile of files three to four feet high. The Quartermaster-General, my boss, was a clever, delightful work-glutton. So we sweated and ran together for a while a neck and neck race with our piles of files, but I was the younger and he was the first to be ordered off by the doctors to Europe. Then I, at the age of forty-three, stepped into his shoes and became officiating Quartermaster-General in India. Unluckily, the Government at that moment was in a very stingy mood. They refused to provide pay to fill the post I was vacating and Sir George White, the C.-in-C., asked me to duplicate myself and do the double work. My heart sank, but there was nothing for it but

to have a try. The day came; the Q.M.G. went home *and with him went the whole of his share of the work.* As for my own share, the hard twelve hours' task melted by some magic into the Socialist's dream of a six hours' day. How was that? Because, when a question came up from one of the Departments I had formerly been forced to compose a long minute upon it, explaining the case, putting my own views, and endeavouring to persuade the Quartermaster-General to accept them. He was a highly conscientious man and if he differed from me he liked to put on record his reasons—several pages of reasons. Or, if he agreed with me, still he liked to agree in his own words and to "put them on record." Now, when I became Q.M.G. and D.Q.M.G. rolled into one I studied the case as formerly, but there my work ended: I had not to persuade my own subordinates: I had no superior except the Commander-in-Chief, who was delighted to be left alone: I just gave an order—quite a simple matter unless a man's afraid: "Yes," I said, or "No!"

The moral of my reminiscence is plain: the higher up the ladder you climb the less you have to do; provided: (1) you have some courage; (2) you have some trust; (3) you have your office so organised that you don't have to deal with more than three or four responsible heads. If a "mass of work" fell upon "the unhappy shoulders of a Minister of Defence" it would be his own fault. *If big men are overwhelmed with detail it is always their own fault.* If, for instance, Mr. Winston Churchill undertook the duties of Minister of Defence he would surely have less work in his new office

than in his old, seeing he would only deal with three subordinate Ministers instead of, as formerly, with some seven or eight Army Councillors; and would only have to persuade the P.M. plus five or six Cabinet Ministers instead of the P.M. and twenty Cabinet Ministers, two of them (Sea and Air) most jealous and most obstructive rivals.

One more point about the new model Cabinet before passing on to the C.I.D. The P.M. should be supported by a Chief of the Staff without vote or voice; a sort of Roman Augur seeking signs of the times, not in the entrails of dead birds, but by sounding the deep currents of human thought and by listening to the songs of the live little birds who nestle in the bosoms of supermen: a Chief of Staff drawing £5,000 a year for collating intelligence and for casting horoscopes: a political expert freed from the executive worries of the whips; from speeches, banquets and propaganda work; who would assemble the shadows of coming events into his ink bottle and with them draft out plans of campaign to meet each successive danger as it is disclosed by the ceaseless invasion of the future by the past. Bolts out of the blue would be discounted by this mentor to a P.M. and unpreparedness might cease to be endemic in British Cabinets. In a word, the mind of this modern Augur would be released from personal anxiety or responsibility as to the daily bread of Parliament and would be focussed entirely on baking loaves for the morrow. He would cease to be a hewer of wood or drawer of water like the ordinary secretary to a Committee but would plant acorns or dig wells. He would be a General Staff man, in short, and neither an Aide-

de-Camp nor an Adjutant. To "practical politicians" this idea may seem impracticable; actually, whenever a soldier or a sailor is brought into close touch with big politicians his criticism is that they do not seem to have a thought to spare for the cloud no larger than a man's hand. Let anyone look back and they will see how we get into one scrape after another owing to our hand-to-mouth politics. Politics and the Navy equally suffer from having no General Staff. Take the Suffrage trouble: had Asquith had a political Chief of the General Staff, the moment the law was broken that officer would have laid before his P.M. alternative sets of operation orders drafted so as to force the Government to make up their minds at once whether they, as Liberals, should conciliate the women or control them. Actually, there were no orders; the foolish rank and file of the party were allowed to toy with the lovely nettles instead of grasping them, and the result was a loss of face not only by the liberal party but by the whole masculine gender. Once, in pre-war days, I took the opportunity of crossing from Whitehall Gardens to Downing Street with Mr. Asquith to put my idea of the glorified Staff Officer to him direct. He listened with his usual affability and replied that if he could only lay his hands on a man of the calibre I had indicated to him he would be glad to pay him not £5,000 a year but £10,000. Five minutes previously the P.M. had been talking to his own Secretary on the C.I.D., Sir Maurice Hankey; an officer possessing all the attributes considered so rare, except the political *flair*. Not double but half the £5,000 would have made him passing rich. Since then this very officer, Hankey,



has been made. Secretary to the Cabinet! Perhaps great minds have been thinking alike and my plan has been put into operation, to the man and to the letter, before I have had time to get out my patent? I hope so; but I fear not; I have no knowledge, but I feel certain that Hankey is being used to draw up agenda for meetings, collating stuff bearing on the subject to be discussed and keeping the great Departments aware of what is about to happen at that Cabinet as well as what has happened when it is over. These are big improvements and in their way excellent. They make Hankey so powerful that, if he had not the reputation of being a saint, a cabal would have been formed long ago to turn him out. But, if I am correct in my imaginings, this is not the sort of appointment I advocate. I mean some one else; some one who has very little to do with daily exigencies; some one left free to map out questions of policy in advance; to ponder over the future. So I say once more, it is not an Adjutant but a General Staff Officer who is needed by the Cabinet machine: a man entirely shielded from the impact of every-day worries or every-day work so that when an emergency arises he may step forward and say, "Here, gentlemen, is a paper dealing with this matter; drawn up two years ago, it may save you trouble." So there! Let us turn to the C.I.D.

The C.I.D. was conceived in the brain of Lord Sydenham and was fondly nursed through its infancy by Mr. Balfour. This was the biggest thing he had ever handled and it promised to be the biggest success. But, to my thinking, he is our Imperial Jonah. Though his beautiful ideas most



beautifully shoot up luck seems to be against them; not one of them can live through the winter and become perennial. The C.I.D. did great work in its day and looked as if it were going to be an exception. But now——! Alive, it still is, but on the shelf, hardly used, since its organism was perverted in 1915 into a mere blunderbuss which the P.M. can load how he likes, point where he likes and discharge at what or whom he dislikes.

When Campbell-Bannerman came into his own he was terribly afraid of the infernal machine left behind him by Balfour. He was persuaded that it might become a rival organism to his Cabinet and that it would prejudice his own power. But when that shrewd old Scot got into actual touch with Balfour's abhorred legacy he awoke as with a start to two facts:

(1) A Prime Minister is either *alter ego* to the Minister of Defence or he is a sham.

(2) A Prime Minister can only be that by presiding, frequently, at the C.I.D. or some similar conference.

So C.-B. fathered the C.I.D. and became a good friend to the fighting Services. In his short day some excellent business was put through and the fact that the P.M. was supposed to be next door to a pacifist rather helped the Navy and Army than otherwise. The C.I.D. was not executive, of course: oh no, of course not! But if the C.I.D. came to, let us call it a "view," with C.-B. sitting at the head of the table it wasn't more than a brace of shakes before he rose from that chair and sat in another chair when instantly the "view" became a vote. Here at once was the secret of the power

of the C.I.D. and the seed of its decay. The procedure was like this: the Secretary, with the P.M.'s permission, would write a paper suggesting something offensive or defensive to be done involving, perhaps, finance, India, foreign policy, home policy. The C.I.D. would discuss the matter and the P.M. would perhaps appoint a sub-committee to tackle it. *For that sub-committee the best men in the Empire were available: Lord Morley, Haldane, Asquith.* When the sub-committee presented its report the matter was again discussed and the decision, though only a consultative opinion in theory, was, actually, an executive decision. Not only was the decision executive in fact, but it could be put in force very quickly. Ministers outside the Cabinet, presented with an agreement between the Prime Minister, those of their colleagues who were more nearly concerned and the military and naval experts, were helpless. Though they might have fought, argued or obstructed for sessions had the P.M. made the proposal to them "off his own bat" they couldn't stand at all against the organised effort of the C.I.D. Hence the fatal idea began to fix itself in the minds of these blokes that they must get themselves summoned as often as possible to C.I.D. meetings!

Mr. Asquith was, in his easy-going way, keen on the C.I.D.; also, certainly, he showed up there to great advantage. Just as the C.I.D. was Mr. Balfour's biggest achievement, so, to my thinking, Mr. Asquith brought off some of his best coups, not in the resounding halls of Westminster, but in the poky second-floor flat of Whitehall Gardens. The way he would cozen indignant Secretaries of State and flustered Dominion Premiers out of their bad tempers

was very miraculous. Here were people ready to fly at one another's throats and then, the P.M. states *the* case, when lo! each side thinks he is stating *their* case!

"For he in slights and juggling feates did flow,  
And of legierdemayne the mysteries did know."

Then we all used to go away saying to one another what a tremendous fellow was Asquith, *but the business done was often insignificant; for everything, almost, was a compromise.*

During Asquith's tenure the dry-rot set in. When he took over, and for some time afterwards, the C.I.D. was small, safe and sound. The structural principle on which it had been built up was that it should form a common ground whereon the leading sailors and soldiers of the day might foregather and compare notes under the direct personal supervision and guidance of the Prime Minister of the day. Both the politicians and the military profited. In that select society a P.M. could quickly enough see for himself whether the sailors and soldiers were whole-heartedly backing their political chiefs. There was no cause for a sailor to differ in public with his First Lord: in course of conversation the P.M. could very quickly lay bare the situation. On their side, the military met in surroundings less formal than usual statesmen with wide views and a highly cultivated talent for expressing those views. The politicians learned that they didn't necessarily know everything because they could talk about anything; they learnt, also, to grasp the difference between a Service without a General Staff, each man of it armed with his own private ideas only,

and a service with a General Staff who came down imbued to a man with a common doctrine. Yes, there were quite a few things taught and learnt during straight talks at the C.I.D.

Those days passed and for several years before the war the C.I.D. was undergoing a change. The preparation by departments of the War Book gave Secretaries of State an opening. The politicians crowded in; the three or four soldiers and sailors could hardly find sitting room. If there was hardly room for a sailor or soldier to sit there was still less opening for him to talk! The Royal Commissioners on the Dardanelles were unable to picture the real state of affairs and so they were vastly puzzled by the direct conflict of evidence as to whether the soldiers and sailors could have had any voice in the decisions. Mr. Balfour and Mr. Asquith swore one thing; Lord Fisher swore the contrary. The reason of the misunderstanding is simply that the constitution of the C.I.D. had been steadily changing and that the P.M. and Mr. Balfour had not realised it was getting farther and farther away from the soldiers and sailors and nearer and nearer to a specially convened inner circle of Cabinet favourites. What Mr. Balfour and Mr. Asquith said referred to an earlier period and may have remained a pious intention; what Lord Fisher said, he had *felt*; and if he, a self-assertive man, had felt it, how much more would the average shy sailor or soldier feel it? The changing moral atmosphere of the C.I.D. coincided with a physical regrouping. Originally the First Lord and the Secretary of State for War with their officers sat up close to the P.M. and the four or five additional members, perhaps

the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Foreign Secretary, or the Colonial Secretary were incidentals. Later on the P.M.'s end of the table was stormed by the politicians, the soldiers and sailors being pressed to the far end towards the door. No soldier or sailor ever spoke during a discussion in those latter days, unless he was "billed" to make a statement or first spoken to, but politicians would eagerly break in on their own and deliver little speeches. Searching in my memory for an instance of either of the Services taking the initiative in a discussion, the only exception I can recollect is, my own attempt to tell a big meeting about our amphibious manœuvres at Malta when the two battleships had been sunk by submarines although they had ample warning of the danger. I *had* to get this story off my chest because I had promised Lord Fisher I would do it, but the effort of barging in upon these big men was so great that I should have curled up half-way had not Colonel Seely given me encouragement.

So the old C.I.D. merged first into the Dardanelles Committee; then into the War Committee; then into a War Cabinet and then into what they call, I believe, a special Cabinet; each a little more autocratic than the other; and now that the C.I.D. idea is past mending it will be safer in every way to end it.

The word "war" being left out the natural process would seem to have been to have reverted to the C.I.D., the parent organisation from which these Committees and Cabinets were descended. But although nominally alive it shows no sign of life. The last act I know of the C.I.D. having perpetrated

must, I think, have poisoned it. In the autumn of 1915 the C.I.D. paper was used to print, and the secretariat were used to circulate, certain well-timed slanders against British officers and rank and file fighting then at the Dardanelles. The slanders I repeat were printed in the C.I.D. best style and must have seemed to the personages favoured with them to carry the imprimatur of the Prime Minister. The object was to create an acutely painful impression of general debacle in which Mr. Asquith specially would stand right up to his neck. Being "fey" he let them use his own C.I.D. and it downed him right enough—and itself, and many good men and sound ideas besides.

Here was the end of the C.I.D. No Admiralty, no War Office, no other Department of Government worked by old-fashioned British machinery would have allowed itself to be used for a piece of dark trickery. A star chamber had been created: a thing "holding for profitable that which pleased, and for just that which profited."

\* \* \* \* \*

If the C.I.D. excrescence has to be lopped off we must have some new machinery to bring the Services together and make their views permeate to the Cabinet. A Defence Minister presiding over a United Services General Staff should answer that purpose admirably. At the head the Prime Minister fixing policy in advance; by his side the Defence Minister in daily touch with the Under S. of S. for the Army, the First Lord of the Sea and the Under S. of S. for the Air. The Prime Minister would have a closer grip of the National Executive than is possible with twenty independent managers, for

the direct control would be in the hands of half a dozen great Ministers with whom he would be constantly in touch.

Take the Defence Minister. He would bring Admirals and Generals out of their opposite corners where, since the days of the Stuarts, they have growled at one another, and make them work hand in hand under his own eye. The eccentricities with which four centuries of ploughing lonely furrows have endowed the Admiralty and the War Office would then be shown up. Instead of going into a third corner or joining part the Navy and part the Army, the new Air Marshals would fall in. Objectors have argued that a Defence Minister would lower the "status, authority and efficiency of the Admiralty Board and Naval Staff." Why should he be such an ass as to lower a part of his own status?

"Captains of Industry," so the newspapers say, "are built on a perception of the advantages of combining related undertakings, coal with iron, and both with transport." Exactly. Then why not repeat the process in another field and build a "Captain of War" on a combination of the "related undertakings" Army; Navy; Air Force? A critic of the suggested Ministry of Defence writes, "A coal-mining company and a gas company are both engaged in industry, but they do not require a composite staff!" I myself assert that the shareholders would be the better of it.

The moment a Defence Minister turned to his new duties he would discover that:

(1) The Navy have no General Staff and are so *determined to be different* that they are creating a



"war staff" instead. "A rose by any other name . . . ?" I wonder? Roses of two colours have fought to the death, *vide* York and Lancaster: anyway, the naval war staff are still a newly-formed body, they have not had time yet to create a common doctrine; they would be greatly helped were they brought into close everyday touch with the Army General Staff; a Defence Minister can bring this about; no one else.

(2) The Air Service have no General Staff; a General Staff takes ten years to create.

(3) The Army General Staff has been so busy since the war with policy, politics, Ireland and Mesopotamia that they seem to have had no time to trouble about the Army. They have cold-shouldered reorganisation by the usual means of a Committee which blessed the old order and then turned up its toes.

(4) No manual, so far as I can ascertain, deals with the working together in war or peace of the three Services. No one has laid down, authoritatively, the part to be assigned to each in a landing, an advance along a coast or in working up a great river, or even in an inland battle or a blue-sea battle where only two of the three would be employed. If our airships blow the forts of an enemy harbour to pieces, what happens next? Does the Navy make good or the Army? Are the Commanders to waste a week discussing the good old puzzle as to whether the position to be held is all, or only in part, above high-water mark, and are spring tides to count in fixing that dividing line upon which all amphibious operations now hinge? A sailor landing with a box of ammunition at low water is respon-



sible for it for perhaps 150 yards inland, as far as high-water mark. If the enemy captures it above high-water mark, that is no business of his; he has discharged his business; if the enemy capture it on the beach, that has nothing to do with the Army. Fortunately soldiers and sailors at sea and in the field are more united than Admirals and Generals at Whitehall. But is it really true that because for once in a way dual control happened to work at the Dardanelles we are, therefore, going to stereotype the principle so that, when an Air Marshal appears upon the scene, our forces will be commanded by a triumvirate? At the Dardanelles those strangers the Army and Navy were suddenly flung into one another's arms and, in face of the Turks, they behaved like members of one family. But why that thankfulness and why that sense of surprised relief? Why shouldn't we have got on always during the wars of the past? Why shouldn't we make sure we get on always in the wars of the future?

No one; not John Fortescue himself, can fetch me from anywhere a finer example of mutual goodwill and co-operation between the Services than that furnished by the Dardanelles; yet, even so, no one will pretend we worked together from the outset as we might have worked had there been a United Services Staff. We ourselves manufactured a United Services Staff whilst we were out there. Admiral de Robeck lent us some very fine men who mastered the whole of our military technique and would, in consequence, be fit to take high position in the War Office to-morrow. But the process took weeks. At first the sailors and soldiers

were like foreigners talking different languages. I do not refer so much to systems of signalling and gunnery but to basic technical principles. This should not be; there is no necessity for it to be, and under a Defence Minister supported by a United Services Staff it would not be.

Lord Hugh, the first flying Cecil, writes to the papers<sup>1</sup> to say that:

“ Only those who had an opportunity of observing the Air Service closely can really appreciate how entirely different it is from both the Army and Navy, and how impossible it is for distinguished naval and military officers in high command to administer the Air Service.”

I dare say most people would agree with Lord Hugh that air, water and earth are absolutely distinct and yet it is a funny thing but it is only by mixing them up that we manage to live! One step farther and we shall specialise in fire. Engineers will step into their watertight box and explain “how impossible it is for distinguished naval and military officers in high command” to poke the fire.

The whole of these distinctions are exaggerated. Experts love to magnify the technical mysteries of their trade to the non-expert; *vide* the consequential air with which a man tells his wife so and so is a “matter of business.” High-flying Lord Hugh is justly proud of doing what neither Jim nor Bob can do; they and the mud-crushing public are his little wife who has to be impressed and kept quiet at home by the magic word “business”: MY business; not yours. But although we may not all have had opportunities “of observing the

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 27th January, 1921.

Air Service closely," we do know, we mud-crushers and little wives who stay at home, that there is such a thing as observing a subject too closely; of being unable to see it because you are "it." Having retired to a distance I can now focus my gaze and see quite well that a man who can handle a Cavalry Division in action can handle the Grand Fleet in action; in fact, he's just the fellow to do it. If French had been as young as Beatty he would have fought on Beatty lines at Jutland, and if Beatty had been as old as French at Kimberley he would have galloped the town. All that they would either of them have needed would have been a Staff Officer to put nautical terms into military and vice versa. The same holds good for the Air Service except that, as a squadron of ships moves faster than a squadron of Cavalry, so the air squadrons will move by so much faster again than a squadron of ships. If Lord Hugh Cecil has Jellicoe and Haig in his mind when he suggests that "distinguished naval and military officers high in command" would not prove good interpreters of the dashing, crashing spirit of the air, he may be right. But that is not because Jellicoe is a sailor and Haig a soldier. Would Lord Hugh say that Roger Keyes, the sailor, and Hubert Gough, the soldier, would not rise to the stormy emergencies of the air? If so, I entirely disagree with him, a thing I do seldom.

The main, underlying reason which makes it so important that at the present turning-point of our Imperial history we should create a ministry of defence is because there seems to be no other way of correcting the centrifugal vice which has got into the very life-blood of our Services. Only by

long-sustained efforts have the Artillery been prevented—to some extent—from retiring into their shells. Regimentally, the Cavalry are a force apart; there is as much outcry when an infantry officer gets a cavalry command as if a Bishop was seizing the Woolsack. But it turns out that a Cavalryman is quite competent to command infantry, and these things are strange when it is remembered that the infantryman was more intelligent in his youth and passed a long way over his head at the entrance exams. into the Army! The Guards at one time had so worked and magnified their privileges that they were almost as different from the rest of us as the Cavalry. The Royal Engineers are, actually, as distinct from their comrades of the Line and mounted branches—as much shut away from them in a watertight compartment—as are the Marines.

Directly the new Defence Minister was appointed he would set about forming a United General Staff; not for the three branches of one Service as at present, but for all three Services. And he would stress urgency as it must take five years before the strange elements shake down together and another five years at least before they become a band of brothers putting doctrine above the interests or traditions of any one Service. An United General Staff will be able to effect no real unification of the aerial, naval and military staffs until the whole of its members have been penetrated by a common doctrine. A common doctrine can only be imparted by an uncommon man. Even an uncommon man needs two years if he is to indoctrinate a member of an intensely conservative clique with broad-mindedness. If possible an Admiral should be

chosen as the first Chief of the United Services Staff upon which, it goes without saying, the forces of the Commonwealth and Dominions would be strongly represented.

When the selected experts from Air, Sea and Land have been assembled they will profess common principles. Principles remain steadfast whether they are applied to the clouds, waves or fields, but the *methods* of their application in combined operations will require a new book. Naval and Air experts will feel nervous lest the existing, more numerous, General Staff of the land forces should swallow them. Given an impartial Defence Minister there need be no fear. I believe the Sea and Air will stand together and that they will take the new united Services idea more kindly than their military brethren. Be this as it may, we must not be disappointed if, for a time, our *omnium gatherum* of experts give no output commensurate with the sum of their intellects. They are not likely to do so until recruits begin to come in from the new United Services Staff College.

This U.S.S.C. is another sure sequel to a Defence Minister. The Imperial General Staff must be drawn from the three Services, Naval, Military and Aerial; so many annual vacancies allotted to each Service; one entrance and one final examination; one residence; one lot of lecture rooms; one Commandant.

We made a big mistake when we created a separate Staff College for India, thereby introducing confusion into the spirit of the General Staff. We justly attach importance to the personality of the Master of a public school who has to put his own trade mark upon four or five hundred boys. At a Staff College,

in place of a mixed lot of conscripted children, drawn almost at random from their homes or from private seminaries—instead of these we find ambitious and capable volunteers; selections out of a great Service, in the first flower of their prime; eager, impressionable, retentive. Upon this plastic, fiery stuff the Commandant puts his stamp. If he is worth his salt the whole of the Staff Officers passed into the Army during his tenure will have digested his doctrine. Suppose that, long afterwards, in some battle, the Generalissimo's plan goes wrong; the enemy are weak where they were expected to be strong; there is heavy firing from directions supposed to be clear; the telephones are dumb; the aeroplanes do not return; the fog of war descends. Now a certain Staff College graduate is commanding a British Corps; a man of his year has the Corps on his right, whilst a man of a later batch, but taught by the same Commandant, is Chief of the Staff on his left; *each of these three will know what the other two will do and what they will expect him to do.*

When the Commandant changes the doctrine changes. Therefore, a good Commandant should hold a long tenure. Therefore, also, to have several Commandants of several Staff Colleges, or different Commandants for each Service, when, by a little arrangement and expenditure, the whole of them could be brought together, is akin to madness. I mean every word I write when I declare here that it would be better to trust to mother wit than to have separate Staff or War Colleges for each of the three Services. If we wished to breed discord and confusion that's the way to do it.

When graduates pass out, their first billets should be to another Service ; or, if that can't be done, at least to another branch of the same Service. During their two years at the College they would all have been given more than a casual insight into one another's work. The idea of young military and air officers going to sea may seem strange, but, in fact, it is quite simple, as simple as making a sailor take up a divisional staff billet during manoeuvres or attaching him for autumn manoeuvres to a battery or infantry battalion ; both of which were done by me on Salisbury Plain—done with a success in every instance so outstanding that (unless it were to be assumed that sailors were much better men than soldiers) it looked as if some new, some secret source of energy was being tapped. So it was : a rediscovery had been made of an old truth—the value of change !

In the mapping out of the lives of State servants, the regulations never allow for the value to a human being of change. Cabinet Ministers understand its value to themselves ; it is evident that the most powerful of them are those who exchange portfolios most often. But so strong a *hatred* has the State of change of work amongst subordinates that it will break its own rules to avoid it. The Regulations lay down that at stated intervals Staff Officers must revert to regimental duty. Are these Regulations obeyed by the men who made them ? Let some member of Parliament ask for a return : he will find that they have been systematically violated. Hence the dislike to the red tabs, brass hats, etc. What wonder if they fall foul of regimental ranks when, by their remarks, actions, orders, and mere attitude



they show that they have worn those tabs and hats too long; that they look on themselves as a cut above their regimental comrades.

This misfortune is accentuated by the fact that alone in European Armies, our Staff College students are between 30 and 35 years of age when they join; most of them 35. By the time they have passed out and have done one Staff job, they have little regimental service left. If we lowered the age and made it 25-30: (1) we would have more trained Staff Officers; (2) we would have more officers on the cadres of regiments who ~~had been~~ through the S.C. and therefore more chance of having them serve regimentally.

The Master of Wellington College found that boys were joining who had been crammed with Latin on rotten systems. As a result, they had lost heart; they would not try; as Classics they were ruined for life. So what does the Master do? Being an original character he asks the boys whether they would like to drop Latin for a year and take up Greek? Greek is a grand old lingo, he tells them, and Homer beats cock-fighting. Every boy drops Latin for Greek; sets to work with a will and usually does very well. After a year some of them go back to Latin and easily make good where they had been so badly beaten. Just in the same way, change of service from sea to land, and land to sea, would be the saving of many young sailors and soldiers who are bored stiff with the monotony of their duties. No sadder sight. The human soul struggling with red tape. The cavalryman sick of stables; the sailor nauseated by night watches. At last those agonies are over. The soul is dead. The desire



for change is dead. Another life ruined by routine!

Directly the Services begin to dovetail instead of to overlap a whole series of economics and reforms would spring to the eye of Common Sense. The extravagance of the Naval Service could not exist a year side by side with the economy practised in the Army. All those defence problems now being debated at random in press and Parliament would be studied at the United Services Staff College by the young experiences collected there and would be carried to swift solutions. By the time Naval, Military and Air officers become senior enough to attend Cabinet committees, minds as well as arteries have become rigid; for a generation each of them has stewed and sweated in the traditions of his own Service, seasoned with a spice of contempt for other Services. There is no free give and take then, there is only at best a compromise; not an agreement between friends, but an arrangement where, like the Dutch, each gives as little as he can and tries to take too much.

An agreement between friends! There we have it. But you can't easily be friends with a man of a stranger Service with which there is absolutely no *liaison*, which is run by a fellow called the First Lord, who is reported to be constantly exchanging snarls with the Army Council. So when war comes to throw the soldier and the sailor, for the first time of their lives, into the same boat, they are apt to get on one another's nerves merely through the misfortune that they neither of them know the ordinary little punctilios and etiquettes of the sister service. Not until we remove the pegs upon which we hang our bad habits will we

get rid of them—and those pegs are separate Heads; separate staff colleges; separate, exclusive, differently dressed, differently named, differently doctored General Staffs, starting actually from different schools. Sandhurst, Woolwich and Dartmouth, what could be more separate—what more separate? Why not turn them into one great National School where cadets would begin to be moulded to take their place in that vast lethal machine which we describe by the euphemism “Defence”? Not until they reached their last term would they be earmarked for sea, land or air. Up ~~to that~~ time the system of education and the exams. would be identical for all; after that, towards the end, boys might be allowed to specialise.

We know that men usually fail if they don't know what they're driving at. Where are we going to? What is our imperial *drift*? There is no other word to express our movement. We are allied to a race possessing intense concentration and purpose, the Japanese. We are invited to a conference where we shall be expected to bell the cat for the U.S.A. What a chorus of joy and enthusiasm! Why? Because we have never thought this question out; because we have no united defence staff which could pool experiences gained in the elements to the elucidation of the tangles of policy; because, owing entirely to our lack of staff method, we do not know (1) the Japanese, (2) the U.S.A., (3) our own minds. Shall we do best for the U.S.A. by holding on to our treaty with Japan? Shall we do our best for Japan by merging this treaty into some larger, looser, more ambiguous arrangement? Which course will be better for the

British Empire ? There are opinions. Lord Northcliffe seems to wonder whether Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Curzon will make into an impressive combine at Washington. Others think they will work wonders, seeing one of them knows nothing but his fellow creatures and the other everything except his fellow creatures. But how about the Japs ? How far is it from Formosa to Hong Kong ; how far from Nagasaki to Formosa ? No doubt our representatives will be shepherded by a scratch committee of soldiers, sailors and airmen ; but that is a very ~~different~~ thing from starting off with the matured doctrine of a united Services General Staff behind them.

## CHAPTER XII

### APPLICATION OF ORGANISATION TO THE TROOPS

Once we get a Defence Minister we shall begin to move. But, as things stand, we can see for ourselves that nothing more is being done than ~~than~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~tip~~ <sup>tie</sup> up the pre-war machine and try and keep it on the road. So I propose to devote a few words to the changes in our own Army, which must, I think, in some form or another, take place as soon as we have anyone in authority who has a little time for thought.

In our Great War game, the Division proved itself to be *the* organic piece. For this there were three main reasons: (1) the Division with us marks that first point in the evolution of an Army when officers and men feel they belong no longer to a part, or member, or branch, but to an entity. (2) The units in a Division were, during the war, left together so long that they grew together, whereas corps and Armies kept on changing. (3) The Division has thus become the formation round which the memories and feelings of our Service and ex-Service men have actually learnt to revolve. As the war dragged slowly along, officers and men gradually sank first their brigade and then their battalions into the larger arrangement. There they stopped. The division, not the Army Corps or the Army, became

the pivot of the battle ; sharp in its outline, vibrant to the word of its Commander, crowned with ever-green traditions.

During the war a Division became to us exactly what the Legion used to be to Imperial Rome. But, in the palmy days of Rome, the Legion was never broken up. So long as there was life in Rome there was no talk of cohorts ; the Legion was the unit. Even during the chaotic six months which followed the murder of Julius Cæsar, even at the time when Mark Antony, Octavius, Decimus Brutus, Marcus Brutus, ~~Cassius~~ Dolabella, Planeus, Lepidus, Pëllis, Lucius Marcus had all taken the field, the only things counted, and the only things that counted, were the Legions.

The Frontier Force, the city garrison, the field Armies, reliefs in peace-time, reinforcements in war-time were all by Legions. Later on, when the decline began, the Legions, although their names remained on the Roman Army List, became greatly disorganised. The Standards and Headquarters became a mere depôt, whilst the cohorts were sent here, there and everywhere to meet the pressing needs of the moment. Cohorts from one and the same Legion are shown as serving on the same date in Mesopotamia, Palestine and Constantinople, whilst the Headquarters remained in Egypt—I had almost written Aldershot !

Probably it was a matter of course to the War Office that our old regular Divisions should be broken up as soon as peace was signed.

(1) They had only taken shape a few years before the war. When the war broke out the battalion was still believed to be our basic unit.

(2) They had been framed upon so grandiose a scale that it was impossible in the process of the ordinary reliefs to keep the twelve infantry battalions and the three brigades of Field Artillery, etc., etc., welded permanently together. The units comprising the division could not with us, as was the case with the Roman Legion, be constant: they were always going abroad or coming home, their places being taken by strangers: the shell remained; the contents were constantly shifting. Until the war had lasted a year our Divisions did not get the chance of becoming what the Legions of ~~Rome~~ used to be on the outbreak of war.

Not only, then, are the traditions of the best known Divisions, as for instance the Royal Naval Division, the 29th Division and the 51st Division, scattered to the four winds of heaven by the disbandment of the famous cadre, but the old, original, home service divisions, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th are not really alive—will not become real, living entities until they have been a year at war. How can they be really alive when two years is about the limit any unit will serve with them, whereas, at the precise present moment, there are no Divisions at all? I mean to say, their Headquarters exist, but their battalions are sown broadcast here and there, haphazard, by battalions and by companies over Ireland, Mesopotamia, the Black Sea, Egypt, Palestine, and Lord knows where. In India also they have no existence, the organisation in that country being by mixed brigades of Europeans and Indians framed into temporary formations which are only, so to say, Divisions by courtesy. *Although war experience has proved up to the hilt that the heart, force, vitality,*

*of a British Army is best developed in its Divisions and that the battalion is not big enough or complex enough to generate the same fervour, we have actually at this moment scrapped the Division idea and fallen back upon the effete idea of the battalion! Need this be so? Not at all. Our Divisions are the biggest known; let them become the smallest.*

I myself was one of those Commanders-in-Chief who voted originally for the big Division of three brigades instead of the small Division of two brigades. Now I have changed my mind. As a pure abstract question of organisation two is better than three. During the war it was borne in upon many of us that groups of odd numbers of identical, standardised formations are a mistake. These groups should be divisible by two—always! There are arguments for the odd numbers; two Brigades in the trenches; one Brigade in reserve. That looks pretty on paper and will do very well for a week or so. But when your two front-line Brigades both get worn out and you want to relieve them, you can only move one at a time. The subject is arguable perhaps; all I have space to say here is that the balance of advantages seems to me to be on the side of the even numbers, and I know that during the war three Battalion Brigades were found to be an unmitigated nuisance. A five-company Battalion would also be a curse to its colonel *unless* the Fifth Company were an administrative headquarters Company which stood out from the regular rosters for work and for fighting. War demands a perfectly plain-sailing system of relief. One Brigade in the trenches; one Brigade resting in reserve; two Battalions in the trenches; two Battalions in

reserve. This should be the aim. At the Dardanelles, more often than not, we were all out with no one in reserve—but that was not from choice.

Therefore, I say two Brigades in a Division is better than three, and I will go on to show that the smaller Division would be an all-round gain:

(1) The Division is the organism which, more than any other, responds to the character of its Commander, and it should come comfortably within the grasp of that officer, who should be able to make his presence felt everywhere and every day. There were one or two divisional Commanders who managed to come near this ideal, but, with three big Brigades, the task was well-nigh overwhelming. With two Brigades the exercise of a close and constant personal touch by the Commander would become simple.

(2) The battles of an Empire are fought abroad. There can be no question with us of waiting at home for the enemy to visit London. We have to go for him, to get to him, and smoke him out in his nest. To make provision for any other course is to make provision for starvation. Therefore, our Divisions should be small enough to slip neatly into our ships like swords going home into their scabbards.

We need no prophet, only a clear thinker, to tell us that the military problems facing us to-day are amphibious and that, behind them again—close behind them—stand amphibious-aeronautical problems. Yet no people has hitherto been so hopeless as ourselves in what may be called the General Staff work of amphibious problems. I have tried several times to explain exactly what is General Staff work, but I will once more put it in a nutshell



by quoting the famous bull, "I smell a rat ; it looms on the horizon ; let us nip it in the bud." How did we nip the Turkish Army in the bud ; a rat we had been sniffing around for months ?

The Admiralty had laboriously collected a fleet of transports to convey our troops overseas. This fleet was scattered to the four winds behind the First Lord's back by a military officer (not a General Staff Officer), who went down from the War Office and told the Director of Naval Transport that Lord Kitchener had no further use for the ships. I repeat, the responsible naval authority had no knowledge that his great fleet had been dispersed by a soldier. So far so good. The next thing that happened was the final Cabinet decision to embark the troops. Between the date when it was finally decided to send the 29th Division to the Dardanelles and the date on which the Admiralty were able to reassemble their transports there was an interval of three weeks. These three weeks were, in so far as foresight could then carry, or, in so far as afterthought can now reason—so far indeed as might-have-beens can be conjugated—fatal ! . . . Another sort of rat ; that old, black rat ; that ancient British, watertight-compartment rat had precisely nipped in the bud the Dardanelles Enterprise. These are facts ; sworn to on the Bible by witnesses before a Royal Commission. If this outrage upon organisation does not move us to have one Defence Minister over the three Services, then—what will ?

Remember the air ! Within a few years a Defence Minister will be able to lend wings to a force of the size and weight of a small Division and will cast it off like a peregrine falcon to fly at the enemy's

eyes—his aerodromes, arsenals, ports. Think of it! Two thousand winged adventurers in aluminium arms skimming like mallards over the ocean whilst 4,000 gallant airship fighters follow at eighty miles an hour in their wake. We stand balancing on the very verge of these vertiginous events; they are *here* if only we had eyes to see those shapes; ears to hear the drone of their engines, the swish of their gigantic wings. Forty-five years ago, when the heavier-than-air machine was still safely tucked away in the womb of Time, old Tennyson saw the aerial navies grappling in the blue. Four hundred and fifty years ago Leonardo da Vinci wrote into his diary the words, "there shall be wings," and, more prosaically, made drawings which still exist, to show he was hot on the track of the grand secret. Surely then we who have actually witnessed the Germans doing star turns over London and the second exodus of the Jews, surely we will be worse than Thomas Didymus if we do not put the conquest of the air on a par with the mastery of the sea? Empire depends on command of the best communications of the date. Rome fell because her area had outgrown her straight-line roads. Air command will bind an Empire: loss of air will asphyxiate an Empire. When we were ruling the waves ever so majestically our imperium, if not our power, was still limited by coastline. A backward, undeveloped State stretching far away inland might snap her fingers at the sea. But there is no breathing human being who will snap his fingers at the air. There is no room for barbed-wire entanglements in the air; there is nothing there but clouds to hang your torpedo nets upon. Our future lies in the air, yet

see this year's estimates! Even now it is not too late to stop these four giant warships we are building, obsolete before they are begun, nine-million pounder Noah's Arks; to stop them; to invest them in air bonds.

A joy ride into cloudland? Well; call it names if you will; we are studying Armies and air is a military element. Armies have ever been interested in what was going on overhead; now they will be more interested. Divisions will have to be *portable*; say 6,000 all told; Engineers, Artillery and all other tools and engines of war.

Time flies. We must fly too or fall sheer into the abyss of the might-have-beens. Yes; Time flies; Time is like a bird upon the wing. If you want to bring this thief of life to earth; if you want to pick the gay *panache* called glory from his plumage, you must aim well in front of him. Every golden lad who has slain his hecatomb of longtails knows *that*!

The burning question is how to get the new wine into the old bottle; how to admit quantities of new machines into the old model. At present two-thirds of the whole of our Army are infantry—civilised foot-soldiers left to depend upon their inherited barbarian qualities when they encounter barbarians. Unless other arms happen to be standing by him, the soldier of the line still relies in battle less upon civilisation than on the old fighting blood and his discipline. An Arab or an Afghan wields as good a rifle and bayonet and has probably been better schooled in their use. The same thing applies to the cavalryman who depends upon his horse (very likely no better than Bucephalus or White Surrey)

and his miserable spit which would make old William Longsword shake his sides with laughter could he rise from the dead and handle the degenerate thing.

Bacon speaks of Infantry as the nerves of an Army; some one else, Napier I think, calls them the Queen of Battles; the steel-clad legionary and the heavily-armed hoplite were the foundations of adamant upon which arose the fabrics of Roman Law and Greek art. As to the British Empire, it has been held to be based upon its sailors, a steadfast lot amidst the unstable sea. Yet it is a sure thing that without the Man of the Line, the Contemptible, the white ensign would not float to-day over the flotilla which dominates the Rhine.

Setting aside the landing at Gallipoli as being a feat too singular to serve as an instance, the first battle for Calais at Ypres gives the cleanest-cut sample of the "form" of our professional linesmen. The enemy was more numerous, more enthusiastic, just as brave, with a crushing superiority of machine-guns and, in the earlier phases, of artillery. Who won this battle, a victory as glorious to our arms as that of the Spartans over the Persians? Who won it? We may say, "Lord French," or, perhaps we say, "The Worcesters by their flank attack round about Cheluvelt." Is that true? Was it in any remotest sense a manœuvre battle? What were the Worcesters at that time? Two or three hundred exhausted, disordered Men of the Line. How was it the troops, generally, as far as the eye could reach reacted and advanced plying their rifles like machine-guns? Well, if you want to know the truth, the Men of the Line on that day

as at Inkerman and on many another stricken field were each one a leader to himself. This greatest victory of British Infantry rank and file was won the other day, and, certainly, up to that day, the basis of the British Empire was the heavy-armed foot-slogger, a terror in war, in peace an apostle of good-humour and fair-play. Infantry have ruled the military roost since the end of the thirteenth century, but although they reaffirmed their claim so lately as the battle for Calais we must remember that this world moves in cycles; that cycles do not last for ever, and that, from A.D. 378 to Bannockburn—a long stretch of time—cavalry were the arbiters of battle and infantry were looked upon as a worthless arm which fell victim almost without a struggle to the onset of any body of horse. Usually—almost invariably—it takes the sharp hammer stroke of a disaster to shatter an opinion which has been six or seven hundred years crystallising: nothing less than a charge of Gothic Horse was able to topple over the eight hundred years' renown of the Roman Legionary. But can we not, for once, take time by the forelock: will nothing less material than ten battalions of aeroplanes shake the sugared complacency of Whitehall? To show how solidly entrenched is the infantry soldier—in paper—I need only quote one sentence from the first leader of *The Times* of 30th August, 1920: "When science and invention have done their utmost, the infantry arm will still be the queen of the battle-field, for the fundamental laws of war are unchanging." This sentiment appeals to my infantry heart: I wish it would also appeal to my linesman's head; I should like to believe it, but I

can't. I have studied my profession: I know too well that the pre-eminence of one arm is *not* a "fundamental law of war."

Infantry is threatened by science, and the only way our Regiments of the Line can renew their youth is by embodying mechanical auxiliaries into their own cadres, instead of waiting to let them form themselves into separate and outside bodies which, once organised, will assuredly end by degrading the infantry into being merely their servants and escorts. The vital move now upon the board is to cut down the proportion of men armed with rifle, bomb and bayonet, the proletariat—no longer the queen of battles—and to stiffen the balance with a proportion of the new aristocrats of labour and of war, scientifically trained mechanics, equipped with the latest outfits of military invention.

Infantry move, fire, charge, hold.

Cavalry move and charge, but they cannot hold, and their fire is negligible when compared with the target they themselves present to the enemy's fire. Their movement is rapid compared with Infantry, slow compared with aeroplanes or motorcycles. Though mobile themselves, yet by the bulk of the forage they consume, they hamper the mobility of an Army.

Aeroplanes move and fire, but they cannot charge or hold.

Tanks move, fire, charge, hold and give protection from bomb, shrapnel and small-arm fire as well as from bayonet or sabre charges.

Artillery can (some of it) move and (all of it) fire. They can neither hold nor charge. In action, their shields give protection from rifle fire and

shrapnel; on the line of march they are helpless before Infantry, Cavalry or Tanks.

British taxpayer—there you are! You pays your money and you takes your choice: around what atom will you build your new Army? Is it to be the heavy-armed man of the line in the steel helmet, gas mask: hung like a Christmas tree with bombs, cartridges, water bottle, rations, kit; or, is it to be a cavalry soldier who transfers all these impedimenta to his horse, which makes up for it ten times over by the mountains of forage it consumes; or, is it to be an aeroplane; or a heavy gun; field gun; machine gun; or else; is it to be that mixture of battering ram, battery, fortress and chariot—a tank? An Army must be built up on some one or something—who, what, which is it to be?

Getting on for forty years ago, encouraged by the great Lord Roberts, I first plunged out into print with a booklet entitled, "The Fighting of the Future." In those sanguine days I had no doubt whatever as to the hub of the imperial coach wheel—Majuba Hill had rubbed in that truth with a Boer bullet: I believed as a man believes who has seen with his own eyes and felt through his own wounded body that the soldier trained in musketry, practised in musketry—fed with ball cartridge as was no other soldier in the world—would be the matrix stuff out of which an invincible Army could be created. At the time musketry was regarded as the fad of a handful of notorious asses. The vague Magnificence known to the Subaltern as "Horse Guards" was believed to regard it as a tiresome affair upsetting to the Trinity of Colonel, Adjutant and Sergeant-



Major; interfering with the chief end of man, barrack square drill. The Adjutant was a terrible swell; the musketry instructor was an infernal nuisance and was always spoiling the smartness of the battalion. That was the state of things in the memory of this living writer, and it is pleasant now to look back over those struggles and to think that, working under the ægis of Lord Bobs, I had some hand in realising the theoretical soldiers of my own Booklet and in turning an Army of bull's-eye missers into real, live, rifle shots; into the straightest shooting, celerity and precision marksmen at a moving target or head and shoulders the world has seen since the bowmen of Agincourt and Crécy transformed the Knights of those days into porcupines. Even now, in spite of the bombing machine, in spite of the big gun, field gun and machine gun, no one can dispute the proven fact that, from the start of the Great War to the finish, the infantry soldier was still the arbiter of the fight. We have heard the Artilleryman say with justifiable pride, "Guns now win battles: infantry only occupy ground," but with all respect this won't wash. The occupation of the ground is the victory. The guns may have swept the enemy underground; the machine guns may have kept him there; the aeroplanes may have made his life a misery; the tanks may have broken through his line; but when it came to making good the infantry stormed and stuck it. Therefore, it is natural that most Generals should say, as they do say, with quiet conviction that the infantryman is the pivot round which, upon which, the new model Army must be assembled. Train him, say they, upon the old lines. Let him



be a first-class marksman. Arm him with an automatic rifle which will fire I fear to say how many rounds in a minute, and there you have an ideal atom of the form of action known as force. Organise those atoms into platoons; companies; battalions; brigades; divisions. When you get to that last stage, hook on to your division a proportion of big guns, field guns, machine guns, transport, medical services, trench mortars. Let Corps and Army Headquarters be ready to lend it Cavalry, aeroplanes, tanks, and then you will be ready for the next war.

What are the alternatives? Do the Cavalry still dream of carrying the mimic battles of Salisbury Plain, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, into the field; mimic battles when a handful of lancers, hussars or dragoons affected to regard mere artillery and infantry as game made for brave horsemen and complacent umpires to hunt? For one who had seen the impotence of cavalry in Manchuria, the cavalry training on Salisbury Plain during those years seemed to be a prolonged and most pathetic attempt made by middle-aged men to make believe we were still in the Middle Ages.

The subject is painful to me; one to be cut as short as may be. Next to my book, *Compulsory Service*, the act by which I have injured most myself was the comparison I dared to draw, in a report written during the battle of Liao Yang, between shock cavalry and elephants. Shock cavalry, Liao Yang forced me to announce, were as dead to the world of war as elephants (*vide* footnote on page 202). In Manchuria took place the death of Cavalry. Sick since the South African Campaign they gave

up the ghost at Liao Yang. During that desperate encounter the brave and thrusting Japanese riders were as clean out of the picture as elephant mahouts. They were so clean out of it that Kuroki, who hated not to "use up" whatever he had, set them to cook rice for his hard-pressed infantry. Quite a sensible order, but, I heard the death-knell in it and—what was I to do?

I knew the War Office would receive the obituary notice with rage. But I was paid to send it in. So I pulled myself together *à la* Samson, prepared to perish if only I could bring to the ground that temple patronised by wealth and fashion wherein the Spirit of Cavalry sat enshrined. The effort was made; nothing stirred; only one little tile fell off the roof. "He has a tile loose" was General Sir William Nicholson's comment.

Now (at a cost of how many million wasted pounds of money, tons of forage, not to speak of pleasantly mis-spent careers) the truth is known.<sup>1</sup> Thinking Dragoons knew they were a wash-out in Europe. To seize a fleeting opportunity Cavalry had to be concentrated in the front area, and there was no room for it in the front area where it blocked the roads, villages and pumps. But when the Cavalry were posted in rear with the Corps they were never on the spot where the sanguine kept on imagining they might have been able to do something. So there they stuck, inert, eating up all the oats and hay in France and England; for, although they were dead, they could eat as much

<sup>1</sup> The weight of foodstuffs consumed by the 8,000 horses of a Cavalry Division is 86 tons per diem or nearly thirty lorry loads.

oats as would have given porridge ever more to all the poor of London.

Towards the finale, once more the hopes of the Cavalry began to soar. Here was the classic opening. A routed, worn-out enemy before them—before a Cavalry who had not suffered during the war; who embodied the only allied force which still retained the bulk of its regular officers and had its pre-war, highly trained, splendid N.C.O. What a chance that seemed! But alas, those accursed Germans still would be up-to-date; still refused to be “sports.” The same old song came back from the supposed-to-be-pursuing Cavalry: “Held up by machine guns we are unable to locate; please send infantry.” In Palestine we were told that the Cavalry had at last come into their own; but, in the first place, Asia is an undeveloped theatre where old fashions have long runs; in the second place, under a fine Commander, who had long been black-listed as a heretic because he had faith in the rifle, our splendid Cavalry and Yeomanry at last got a chance to forget their cavalry spirit, and take on the spirit of the common or garden infantryman who gets across country on horse-back.

To anyone who looks through my spectacles, it is clear that Cavalry will form no basis for our Imperial Striking Force of the future. For a time, mounted men will be necessary in Asia. Lord Kitchener himself would hesitate before he started pegging out Afghanistan into barbed wire allotments. There is still space left upon that Continent for Cavalry to use their mobility to find a flank and cut communications. Cavalry can move three times

faster : also, at the end of a march the men, whether for digesting their rations or fighting the enemy, have more life in them than the exhausted Infantry. In an undeveloped area these pulls may still counterbalance the damning facts that Cavalry present seven to eight times as big a target to the rifle or machine guns as Infantry ; eat and drink seven to eight times more ; and cost twice as much to keep.<sup>1</sup>

Take next the aeroplane, for weight and size a miracle of reliability and toughness. But its wings are still in the stage of those of a dragon-fly which has just broken forth from its pupa and there, poised, on the tall bullrush, lets sun and wind play round the delicate pinions until they are attuned to the new elements into which, after a long apprenticeship in mud and water (just like us), the perfected creature is at last about to enter. Although we may believe implicitly in the wonderful future of the aeroplane, our faith is hardly good "cover" for an imperial gamble. We hardly know enough yet about the air to stake our existence upon an element more fickle even than the sea, although already we do *conjecture* enough to feel cool and comfortable when we hear of Armadas of billion dollar dreadnoughts.

On the 15th April, 1915, when I was inspecting the five Service aeroplanes, all that we had in

<sup>1</sup> Taking the peace figures of 1914, a Regiment of line Cavalry at home cost approximately £70,500. Its strength was 694 all ranks and 568 horses. The cost thus was just over £100 a head, all ranks. A Battalion of Line Infantry at home cost £53,300 and its strength was 802 all ranks, giving a cost of just over £65 a head. Since the war horses, oats and hay have risen, relatively,

hand wherewith to tackle the Turkish Empire, Commander Samson remarked—not in an office but out of doors with the enemy in front of him—that if he had some two-seater planes for spotting and reconnaissance as well as a bombing force on the lines and in the proportion then allotted to the Western Front, he could take the Peninsula single-handed from the air.

Now if this famous flying man was right we have found our cornerstone and our imperial Army should be built up round an aeroplane. But was he as right as that? In this case we were assuming (1) that our aeroplanes were at Tenedos: (2) that they could deny to the enemy convoys the one or two long, exposed roads by which he kept touch with the rest of the Ottoman Empire: (3) that they could sink any Turkish ships endeavouring to communicate with the Dardanelles: (4) that the Turkish Army would be starved out of the Narrows so that our Fleet and Army could pass comfortably on to Constantinople.

Now as to (1) unless the Fleet had brought the aeroplanes to Tenedos, they must have flown from Cannes—a feat above their strength in those days; and even supposing they *had* managed to get there without help, they might have been scuppered the first night after their arrival by infantry ferried across from the mainland of Asia Minor. As to (2) and (3), even as early as 1915 a strong force of aeroplanes and seaplanes based upon Tenedos or Imbros could, unaided, have played havoc with the Turkish communications by land and sea. As to (4), within a month the bulk of the enemy forces would have cleared off the Peninsula and

the Turks on the Asiatic side of the Straits would have found themselves in another kind of straits. But the Narrows and their minefield batteries would still have been held in some force, and those garrisons could neither have been starved out nor driven out by aeroplane alone. In short, the aeroplanes would have paved a way for the action of the other two arms: alone, they could not have got to the spot; or, if they got to the spot they could not have stayed on the spot; or, if they got to the spot and stayed on the spot they could not have forced a passage. To my thinking, then, the aeroplane cannot yet look after itself, and nothing that cannot look after itself can be chosen as the basic unit of an Army.

The big gun, the howitzer, the field gun, and the machine gun—we know them well. For myself, I have backed big guns for twenty-five years and was *the only witness* who staked his reputation on them before the Royal Commission on the South African War.<sup>1</sup> At the moment, they and the Engineers who teach us how to escape from them, seem to have the cannon ball at their feet. But you cannot make a pivot or a starting point of a gun if only because the article does not lend itself

<sup>1</sup> Extract from body of the Report on the War in South Africa: "170. . . . Sir Ian Hamilton expressed the view that the field artillery in the War was unnecessarily mobile; that great mobility should be confined to the horse artillery. He called attention to the great amount of space taken up by the number of guns which accompany an Army, and expressed his opinion that two heavy guns could silence six field guns. He considered that the only artillery used in the field should be (a) horse artillery to accompany mounted branches, and (b) position artillery to accompany infantry, at a pace no greater than that of infantry."

to being served out by the piece—or piecemeal. Ordnance, great and small, works in groups. A single gun feels as lonely and uncomfortable on the battlefield as a vacuum in a gale of wind.

To students of German preparations it seemed as though, during the six years immediately preceding the Great War, artillery was treading very close upon the heels of the infantry. Although guns alone could hardly march, fight and win battles; and although infantry might march, fight and win battles without guns, still, the artillery were gaining so fast, that if the whole of the German Ordnance had, in 1912, been deployed in a long line with the whole of the infantry behind them, it was by no means too fanciful to regard the foot soldiers as forming a mere escort to those real, ice-cutting instruments. The war rubbed in this new aspect of the arms. When the first rush was over, it became a case of sit tight. Movement being suspended, the ponderous big guns were put upon an admirable platform. Guns grew upon the battlefield like mushrooms; the great guns attacked, the great guns counter-attacked; the guns lost, the guns won; the infantry quitted or the infantry walked in. So it went on until, at Cambrai, right into this Bombardiers' Paradise, there broke a herd of unheard-of monsters browsing upon shrapnel, scampering through the laborious entanglements as if they were webs of gossamer, straddling the trenches, rooting out the machine-gun nests, putting life and movement back into the battle and proving themselves too nimble to be flattened by our idols the siege guns.

In point of time the tank was the last to take



the field, but, in war, the last is very apt to be first. Consider then the tank; consider it well; for I say unto you that Solomon in all his wisdom hit upon no happier device. For years the idea was in the air and seemed likely to remain there until, suddenly, from Winston Churchill's brain out crawled these lean kine of Pharaoh!

They crawled on to the battle-field out of Winston Churchill's brain did these nightmares; they have gobbled up the fat horses of the Cavalry; they may yet gobble up the infantry with the big gun as a *bonne-bouche* at the end: they are here: they have come to stay: they will either ruin us or we will rope them in and make them serve as the corner-stone of our building. Fifty years B.C. the British were famous for their chariots, replicas, we are told of those driven by the heroes of Homer. In the future let us be famous for our tanks, and if we needs must seek the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth, let us do so seated in a whippet.

Once upon a time, when I was out after tiger in Assam, our camp was raided by a rogue elephant in the night. We scattered into the jungle; we caught up our rifles and ran for it. The rifles were no good: it was too dark to make out which were our own elephants and where was the wild fellow. So he courted our lady elephants to his heart's desire; flattened out our tents; made hay with the toothbrushes and towels and generally enjoyed himself at our expense until dawn when, not being encased in armour of proof, we were able to get evens with him. Now I think an experience like that helps me to enter into the feelings of a Brigadier, say, who has withdrawn his exhausted



men from the trenches into reserve billets in a village behind the line. At midnight he hears that half a dozen tanks have broken through the front and are bearing down upon his Brigade!

Already tanks can gallop one better than Cavalry. Before we know where they are, they will climb and slip through rivers. A morass bothers them; a forest holds them up; a village is an obstacle; tropical heat tires them; but so do these things inflict themselves on Cavalry. A tank with three men and a boy in it chases a Cavalry Brigade and begins to eat it up, at the tail. The horse guns come into action and manage—the country being favourable to artillery—to fend off the monster so long as the day lasts. The light begins to fail; night comes on apace—so does the tank.

The more these vague outlines are considered the more they will fill up with flying figures on earth, sea and sky, whose motive is swiftness; i.e. the power to cope with the fighting man's old enemies space and time. Take the diagram of the battle of Jutland; battle cruisers racing parallel north-westwards and the ships of the line coming up; take that diagram off the sea and plank it down upon whatever continent you like best: replace Jellicoe's ships by heavy armoured tanks and Beatty's by light armoured racers: let whippets stand for the destroyers: plaster the sky with airships and aeroplanes: paint them there as thick as stars; do this and you will gain a truer impression of the crash tactics and high velocity strategies of the future than from poring over false battle pictures by Verestchagin or Meissonier.

The tank is a warship on wheels. The tank

marks as great a revolution in land warfare as an armoured steamship would have marked had it appeared amongst the toilsome triremes at Actium. One ironplated penny steamer off the Thames; only one; and Mark Antony and Cleopatra might have given Rome a sensual basis to her Empire instead of those foundations of decency bequeathed to her by Augustus. Think of it yet again, for this latest terror will carry thought as well as men, ammunition and petrol. Instead of one small ironclad steamer barging into a battle between triremes, take one tank barging into a unit of the "Queen of Battles," a Battalion of heavy-armed infantry. The infantry are naked to the bullet; are as naked as were the Incas when first they encountered the Spaniards encased from head to foot in finest Toledo steel. The men in the tank are armoured more heavily and completely than were those Spaniards and yet they are not, as were the *conquistadores*, weighed down by the weight of their coats of mail. On the contrary, though wearing an impenetrable cuirass they move more lightly and swiftly than Cavalry. They are not tired or hungry or thirsty; they carry heaps of ammunition. Read over the story of Cortés and the Incas. Read of the steel-clad Knights and the French peasants in the Jacquerie.

We must tame the tank and the aeroplane; they've got to be as familiar to us as taxis. Boys must run away to air as Lord Reading, Masfield and other famous men have run away to sea. There's money in the air; there's Empire in the air; news and vision in the air; we don't quite know what till we try: and the first step is to

bring aeroplanes and tanks into the regimental framework.

Every Battalion of our heavy-armed infantry owns a King's Colour and a Regimental Colour. Consecrated emblems, regarded as sacred; the man in the street takes off his hat to them; the soldier salutes them. Emblems of unrecorded heroisms, in war they would still form rallying points round which Scottish or English would die as the Saxons died round the Standard of Harold, only, fire has reversed the old order; warriors who rally to a point are food for machine-guns; we don't want to rally men's bodies nowadays; we want to disperse the Battalion as a body and to unite it only in its spirit.

So the Colours are left at home. Never since I first joined has anyone ventured to display a large crimson piece of silk, gold embroidered, in war. At the Dardanelles, twelve miles from the firing-line, I was begged not to break a little Union Jack no bigger than a handkerchief, lest it should bring down bombs.

Since Rorke's Drift, our Colours have gone into the Cathedrals when our country called upon us to fight. Poison gas would have been impossible to people fighting under consecrated Colours. If only we could get back our Colours we might put back chivalry into war.

Seek for the atom round which the armies of Napoleon, Marlborough and Julius Cæsar crystallised, you will find it in the Eagles, the Colours and the Standards. Infantry has lost infinitely in having had to part with these insignia just at a moment when its own pre-eminence is being chal-

lenged by machines. Unless our artillery and infantry can graft on to their body a gland which will rejuvenate them, they have seen the best of their days. So now I say: do not begin by raising Battalions of tanks as separate corps; do not take any step which may tend to turn our infantry into tank guards, tank supports or tank escorts; but rather, make a start by gazetting to every Battalion of the Guards or Line, two brand-new ironclad Ensigns to carry the King's Colours and the Regimental Colour into action—two tanks. So violent a juxtaposition of the old and new may startle. The idea of chaining twenty mile-an-hour monsters to three mile-an-hour masters may seem absurd. Try it, and the Battalion Commanders will rise to the occasion and will get plenty of work, plenty of good value, out of their tanks. A tank could help a Battalion in a hundred ways, not only in battle, but in quarters and in the line of march. When we sprinkle Lewis guns and maxims through the Battalion and "reinforce" infantry with automatic rifles which will loose off thousands of rounds in a few minutes; have the speakers ever weighed those cartridges? How are our hungry fire-arms to be fed? There is only one answer. They must be fed by armoured caterpillar transport; i.e. by tanks.

We are to have five Companies instead of four. The new unit will be made up of the administrative people; cooks, servants, batmen, orderly-room clerks, orderlies, etc. This head-quarters Company might possess as part of its outfit a section of light guns made to serve against aircraft or tanks and these, with two Maxims and eight Lewis guns,

would give it a higher resistant fire power than that possessed by a whole pre-war Battalion. The two tanks would be with it; watchdogs ready at a moment's notice to dart out, to rally the broken ranks or to head them in the pursuit. Whenever the Commander wished to mass the whole of his tanks the mobility of the monsters would simplify the move. In peace time the regimental tanks would, naturally, do some weeks' training every summer with the tanks of the Division.

A Battalion equipped with two to four fighting tanks and lightly armoured caterpillar transport, with light artillery and trench mortars, would cost more money than an existing Battalion, although it would be much weaker in man power, for a proportion of the new men would belong to a more highly paid category of labour than our present rank and file; also, be it said in passing, a more troublesome category to manage. But engineers and skilled mechanics *can* be managed by the right sort of officer and they make rare good fighters: as to cost, the Battalion would not, after all, cost half as much as one of our existing infantry Brigades of four Battalions and yet, in independence of movement, in fire, shock and holding power the new model units should prove more than a match for one of those infantry Brigades. Assume the two types to be equal; think what a saving in sea and land transport, in rations and in casualties, by endowing some 600 souls (for that is the strength I would aim at) with the war value now possessed by 4,000.

It is true that no less an authority than our Field-Marshal, Chief of the Imperial General Staff,

spoke the other day as if the notion of saving man power by machinery was based upon fallacy. "We might reduce the number of men," he is reported to have said, "but the enemy might not. We might produce a thousand tanks in the field and say that they were equivalent to a thousand divisions and, therefore, that was quite enough. But the enemy might produce 2,000 tanks in the field, provided he had the man power to do it." The weak part of this powerful argument appears to me to lie in its tail. The proviso contained in the last nine words is surely incomplete? The sentence should have ended "provided he had the man power, man intelligence, money power, manufacturing power and petrol power to do it"; and there is a pretty big order! We could run 2,000 tanks in four months' time; Russia with all her man power wouldn't get them finished until the pattern was obsolete, and then she couldn't man them. An enemy would need more than "man power" to see England's hand in tanks. Put the problem into terms of nations. If man power is to spell victory, we are done. The entire white population of our widely separated Empire is sixty-eight millions, which is less than the concentrated population of continental Germany! If man power alone is to be counted, then, as in pre-war days, the British Empire on a voluntary basis could hardly cope single-handed with Turkey. But, put war on to a scientific basis, calling for an immense output of skilled mechanics and engines, and there is only one country in the world which would, at present, meet us on equal terms; namely, the U.S.A. So far we have made no move towards this solution.

Whether or no the clever yet unimaginative remarks of the Field-Marshal reflect a settled policy, assuredly we are acting as if it did so. At this very time, with all our vast industrial resources, with science and her inventions at our beck and call, we had on the 6th of June, 1921, 60,000 heavy-armed infantry holding down the light-armed Arabs of Mesopotamia. We cannot hold our Empire any longer on these man-power lines. What is the alternative? We have got to make a new model professional army capable of eating up "The Nation in Arms"—and we can do it. There is only one real title to Empire in peace or war; superiority; but, not necessarily superiority in man power. If the leading race goes to sleep and the subject race comes on, there can be only one end to the race—man power must win. The Arabs, Afridis, Waziris, Fuzzy Wuzzies are busy, copying our infantry: many deserters trained by us are in their tribes; they are coming on apace: they have good rifles and cartridges and know how to use them; we must invent: we must go one better; or we are caught: we must lift war on to a more mechanical, industrial, scientific plane. Let none of us be so mad as to imagine we can oppose a law of the Medes and Persians to natural laws, or insist that our Army of the past is going to prove a passport to an eternity of Empire. There is nothing eternal about the British Army; nothing fixed—thank God, for that proves it is alive, although there are some soldiers who seem to think it is as blasphemous to alter one of its buttons as to question the doctrine of the Trinity. When I first joined "A" Company of the Gordons it was still spoken of affectionately,



though not officially, as the Grenadier Company. So, if it is a *sine qua non* in our Army to find a precedent in the past, be it understood that when my father joined the Gordon Highlanders he served in Number 8 of the "Light Company"; that Number 1 was the "Grenadier Company." There is nothing, therefore, now so very revolutionary in proposing certain changes whereby trench mortars would be handled by the old grenadiers and motor-cycles be used to help the old Light Company to recover its alertness.

These are my ideas. The Brigade would contain four of these ideal Battalions; the Division two Brigades. The aim should be to keep the Division down to the size of the Roman Legion in its prime; i.e. 6,200 fighting men. In any case the existing Division must be cut down. On the road one of our present Divisions with its transport extends for sixteen miles! With the new model Divisions suggested:

(1) It would be possible to carry out reliefs by Divisions whereby those vital formations would remain constant, intact, together with their artillery, tanks and aeroplanes.

(2) We should then have a number of Armies in miniature; Armies handy enough to slip neatly, quickly, all complete, into airships or sea ships.

(3) By these means, i.e. by dividing our Army into a larger number of smaller Divisions and by making each Division an epitome of the grand Army, we shall best combat our racial *esprit de clique* to which the new machines are lending themselves.

For the last of the three reasons, as well as on



other grounds, aeroplanes should form part of the Divisional Artillery. Aeroplanes are themselves artillery of a sort, and, when they are not actually working on reconnaissance or as long-range artillery, their most essential duty is to spot for the Divisional Artillery, a duty which will be carried out twice as well when the observer and flyer know their gunners and the gunners know them and their manners and air customs.

As to the immediate and practical bearing of my proposal, I doubt if there is a single soldier who will question the numerous advantages of keeping our Divisions intact, but it may be objected that when we have got rid of our temporary "reparations" garrisons there will be only one place abroad where there could be a garrison of the size even of my reduced divisions; i.e. the Mediterranean. When we get east of Suez, it may be argued, we use mixed Brigades of British and Indian troops, and once we do that the identity of our British Divisions must be lost. I believe there are several ways of meeting this objection and I will proceed to state one of them:

Suppose the 6th Division has its headquarters on Salisbury Plain and that its eight Battalions are all 1st Battalions. The 2/6th Division comprising the second Battalions is posted, say, to Rawal Pindi. On arrival, two Battalions in each of its Brigades, four Battalions in all, would be replaced by native Battalions. The Division would remain essentially "the 2/6th" under its same Commander, brigadiers and staff. Behind it would be formed, at once, "the 3/6th" and "the 4/6th" Divisions on exactly the same model except that the Brigades would

consist of one British and three Indian Battalions instead of, as in "the 1/6th" or as in "the 2/6th," of two British and two Indian. The guns, aeroplanes and tanks would be British. Whether, on the Roman plan, "the 2/6th" should remain permanently at Rawal Pindi or only for its tour of ten to fifteen years of foreign service, changing places then with "the 1/6th," is a matter of sentiment. So long as, on the Cardwell analogy, the Battalions abroad were the second Battalions of the units serving at home the officers and men would work eastwards and westwards freely, doing part of their service at home and part in India, just as at present—but always as part of the same division, the 6th.

Regimental "side" (the bad side of pride) will spread like a prairie fire to our aeroplanes—unless we watch it. Association is the antidote to exclusiveness. Paint the pants blue; invent fanciful new titles; segregate into a separate corps, and you lead your Air Marshals and their men direct to the never, never land of "Look out for my wings; I don't know you, Mr. Mud-crusher, and I mean to take jolly good care neither you nor your flat-footed Generals shall ever know me!" Wings instead of spurs, only more so. In 1898 the artillery Commander loaned out his guns to infantry Commanders as if they were incomprehensible mysteries, and the infantry Commander received them in the same spirit. On that same Salisbury Plain, eight and nine years later, I made infantry officers exchange places for six weeks at a stretch with gunners. Apart from all other advantages, administrative, strategic and tactical, the best way to prevent

our new model Army from becoming a loose handful of separate stuck-up sticks instead of a firmly clamped, wire-bound military fascine, is to organise the infantry of each Division to include land machines, and to organise the Divisional Artillery to include air machines. A Division so organised will be complete in itself, ready to go anywhere and tackle any enemy exactly like a Roman Legion, and the mighty atom on which it will be built up must be the tank.

## CHAPTER XIII

### APPLICATION OF DISCIPLINE, TRAINING, PATRIOTISM

Simplicity of line ; harmony with surroundings ; adaptability to habits of inmates are the characteristics of good architecture and also of a sound organisation. We have applied these standards to our new model and the results have been duly set forth. India, the Commonwealth and the Dominions stand or fall with us. They are not watertight compartments each of which is meant to close up and look out for itself the moment a collision occurs. Therefore, so soon as we get our own house in order they will fall instinctively into line. But you can't fall into line with a zigzag !

There remain discipline, training, patriotism, and there is nothing much wrong with the *methods* of their application by our officers, once they get to work.

The Army does not get hold of the lads it enlists until they are eighteen. During the years between the South African War and the Great War it was not easy to get the men to understand the great moral and cultural ideas underlying the conception of the British Empire. The Rank and File had been so saturated with trade notions and the ethics of commercialism that they could not conceive of

it as anything but a "business." Unless it could be shown there was "money in it" they thought the Empire must be a sort of Toff amongst nations, and although they were always keen enough to fight for fighting's sake, they did not wax enthusiastic over turning John Bull into a Toff. The fault here was that of the Education Department: the British Empire, its aims and enemies had never been explained.

Most recruits had fallen between two stools, their parents and the schools. The parents thought the schools were going to teach discipline and patriotism and the schoolmasters said those subjects were not in their curriculum. But it is in childhood, when the infant is still within its home, that the ball cartridge is in the breech of the rifle. The mother aims carefully or carelessly as she is an unselfish or a selfish woman and only pulls the trigger when she sends the child to school. Storms may drive the bullet from its course, obstacles may break it in mid-career, but nothing in after life can prevent that original impulsion from being the prime factor of its flight.

Of all Japanese, the one who has most vividly struck European imaginations is the late General Count Nogi, the Commander of the besieging Army at Port Arthur. Of all the many men of that race I myself have had the privilege of knowing, he was the most wonderful; with a simplicity equalling that of Kuroki, and an inward fire of patriotic energy approaching that which burnt in the heart of Kodama. Very respectfully, then, let us listen to this flower of Japanese chivalry: "Bushido," he says, "is what our parents have taught us with

great earnestness, day and night, from our fourth or fifth year, when we first began to have some knowledge of the things around us."

So we get the capture of Port Arthur, and the supreme victory of Mukden as a monument not to women's votes but to their domestic virtues. The tradition wins in the long run. As a mere stripling young Yamagata swam out with his sword to attack a foreign ironclad. The Americans were much amused. Marshal Yamagata's spirit has overrun a continent to-day and the Americans are no longer amused. The mothers can keep the right spirit alive. Under their tender hands the plastic, formless spirit of the child "that cometh from afar" can be moulded into reverence for tradition and enthusiasm for what is noble and brave. Then, no matter what our type of Army be, Regular, Militia, Conscript, Volunteer, it would assuredly be the best of its kind the wide world over.

In the opening years of the century, every single recruit enrolled under the Banner of the Rising Sun had been born and bred in that antique virtuous atmosphere. Each one of them had absorbed the great enthusiasm twenty years previously with his mother's milk, and the schools had zealously continued the education, marching their classes through deepest snow to teach them that the idea of storming Moscow was mere child's play for patriots; keeping ever before them the memory of their national heroes and the thought that the chief end of man was to die nobly; to be, in his own idiom, "determined to die" whenever his Emperor might make the signal!

The British recruit, officer or man, is not of the

temper to absorb ideas which died in Europe with Don Quixote. He would consider them heathenish, and indeed they do not fit in readily with our codes. But we soldiers might fairly demand from government, from the Church and from board schools, that our recruits should come to us with an inkling at least of the gist of a citizen's duties. A short time before the war, some leaflets fluttered across the educational horizon—leaflets wherein the meaning of the words "policemen," "municipality," "Lord Mayor" were expounded; containing also a few straight tips as to how an artful dodger might make a bit by working the State oracle. This is not the stamp of training in citizenship here advocated. Milton tells us that a "complete and generous education" should fit a man "to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." But the young men we used to enlist at our depôts—the youths for whose elementary education we used to pay fifteen millions a year, then twenty and then, for 1913-14, nearly twenty-six millions a year, owed strangely little of their equipment for State service in peace or war to their *State* education. The book learning they possessed had been given them to get the better of their comrades; *not* to help their comrades. Their theory of duty to the State in peace was limited to doing nothing actively noxious to the common weal; to keeping on the right side of the law. As to their duty in war, I have made it my business to ask young soldiers this question, and not one of them has been able to remember any advice during the course of his board school education as to how a true Briton



could best help his country in war-time. The scholastic idea seems to have been that we were so admirable that we had no enemies. For that reason, perhaps, the lads were brought up to be their own. For certainly the egoist has no enemy like himself and Milton recognised that fact long ago when he laid his stress upon a "generous" education. The State schools prepare our boys for peace and prosperous times: this is unfair: the people ought to be prepared for war and hard times. As it is, recruits have to learn the meaning of words like "fair play," "renown," "honour," "loyalty," "glory," after they have joined the Colours.

Here is where the British Officer comes in and, to the surprise even of those who know him best and admire him most, turns himself into a pedagogue and throws himself heart and soul into saving the heart and soul of his little brother, the soldier. How does he do it? How *can* he do it? He is shy; inarticulate; loathes ink-splashing; turns pale at the idea of a lecture. But, he has been at a public school!

Compare for a moment the ideals set before the public schoolboy and the State school scholar; see the paragon of the public school; a gallant figure. One who helps—who rules—who leads—who orders; Captain of the Eleven; the mainstay of the football team; already a man in temper and resource, he wields more power more beneficially than many a Premier. The finished public school-boy has been well trained in the art of Life, though, naturally enough, when this monastically-bred creature comes in contact with women he is out of his depth in an instant.



The paragon of the board school is not the Captain of a team, but the individual prize winner. Behold the pasty-faced creature step forth—a knock-kneed marvel who has made the mistresses' career. He is no more use for battling with the wide world than one of the many sick headaches his erudition has cost him. There he stands, his memory stuffed as full of half-digested information as a Strasburg goose with truffles. His only chance in life is to get a post whence he will be able again to disgorgé the unassimilated contents of his brain into other young minds as an owl vomits its midnight banquets into the gaping throats of the owlets; or else—that grand Eldorado—a seat on a Government office stool. Once, in an evil hour, a great merchant was bitten with the whim of taking the top boys of board schools, on their intellectual merits, as the future managers of his immense concerns abroad. Had he lived only a year or two longer he would have witnessed the ruin of his business. Any average public schoolboy was their master when it came to managing native labour or negotiating with others in the give and take see-saw of the battle of life.

Our State spends more and more money on education and, speaking purely as a soldier, I gratefully admit that a recruit's brains have been so far improved that he will pass muster as a trained soldier in one-third of the time he took in 1870. Pass muster? Yes, as to his knowledge; but have his heart, character, physique also shown value for the money? How about discipline, training and patriotism? Remember, we have behind us the report of a Royal Commission on

education to say that the trifle of £20,000,000 a year we were then spending was "having no effect on poverty"; was not "developing self-reliance or forethought in the characters of the children." Indeed, we needed no Royal Commission to tell us so; have we not eyes and ears? Have we not memories? We have never got our money's worth: nor will that same system, intensified and prolonged, give us value for our £97,206,348! How should it? How on earth should anything in a board school curriculum develop self-reliance? If the senior class were told to run the school now and then . . . ?

The baby of a labourer, being a British labourer's baby, has very likely better hereditary claims on Society than the baby of a profiteering war Peer. The ups and downs have been so tremendous in these islands that we have ploughmen's children with Royal Descents running back to the Emperors of the East or the Emperors of the West whose Member of Parliament would get a fright if he saw his own family tree. But here, in these same islands, the children of Labour are handicapped—not because they don't get money enough voted for their education, but because the money goes on book learning. They are taught, very feebly, to obey; they are not taught to command and, if they are not taught to command, how ever are they going to govern? Public schoolboys may learn devilish little, but at least they do get a chance of learning how to rule their boy comrades: board schoolboys may learn no end of stale news about figures, words and places, but they hardly ever get a real chance of learning how to handle the other boys.

“ Education for all ” might, but does not, mean “ Equal opportunities for all. ” By including bodily training and character discipline in the term “ education ” and by enlisting the big boys to help them, the masters of public schools have made it easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a poor man to enter the Cabinet. What we call in our common talk “ the governing classes ” are “ public school classes ”: they with but few exceptions have run the British Empire. Where the exception has come in, although that outsider might be no end more brilliant than the rest, he has rarely carried through without letting us down. Heredity has nothing to say to this; not in these islands where the breeding of the lower classes is not low. Here the pot has always been on the boil and particles of the brew have always been darting up into the scum and falling back into the sediment. There is no earthly reason why the son of a British charwoman by a British sea cook shouldn't rule all England *except* that he has never been disciplined or trained—*except* that he has never been taught to rule others—let alone himself—at his expensive State school.

The boy scouts have managed, by efforts compared with which the defence of Mafeking was a picnic, to break through the cocoon of routine set up by soulless Boards and Administrators. But, large as their figures loom, they are only a tiny percentage of the whole boy population. Moral character and patriotism; team work; initiative; self-reliance; inter-reliance; self-control, control of comrades are taught to hardly more than ten per cent. of the

800,000 boys aged 12 and under 14 existing in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Ask a board schoolboy of about 11 years old why he has to attend, he will answer, "Because *I* will be clever when *I* am a man"; or else, "Because of the copper"; or else, more often, "Because *I* will be able to make more money." Ask any 11-year-old boy at a preparatory school why he is going on to a public school and he may say, "Because father was there, of course!" or "Because it's the only school"; or, "Because every decent fellow goes there," the idea from the very start being that the public school is a very splendid place and that he—the small boy—is going there not to beat other fellows in exams., but to acquire merit through being associated with them in so ancient and famous a guild. Working on from that foundation, discipline, training and patriotism come quite naturally.

My plan is that State schools, primary and secondary, should take a leaf out of the book of the great public schools. Boys are not "learning" to be quiet and good when they are forced "by order" of grown-ups to gaze silently at the blackboard and behave like little gentlemen. They are learning to hate blackboards and little gentlemen. The attempt to run boys rigidly on grown-up lines is universal; French, Germans, Greeks, Italians, Chinese try it, and fail—all parents try it and fail. So no wonder our world is a failure. The British public school is an exception because it is not run by grown-ups but by the big boys; the B.P. Scouts are an exception, for there the schoolmaster periodically changes himself into a scoutmaster; becomes

a bigger boy and joins with the other big boys in leading the school into another world ; into realms coloured with a touch of romance ; flavoured with a suspicion of risk ; enlivened with the idea of live enemies and a feeling of Red Indians. Until our State schoolmasters take these idiosyncrasies into account, they must resign themselves to complete loss of control over the most alive side of boy nature, and boys will continue to leave State schools perfect caricatures of what the State school meant them to be.

Baden Powell has shown us how the discipline, training and spirit of the public school can be grafted on to the State school system. Let the school resolve into a company of scouts who always go out for a fortnight's camp in the summer, for that will be the best part of their year's education. If the masters can rise to the new situation they will find that the boys accept the scoutmaster as they never accepted the schoolmaster, for if that scoutmaster bids them march through flood or fire, through fire or flood they will march.

The State has neglected this wonderful lever, the Boy Scout movement, because it has become confused in the official mind with the Cadet movement, which no one has dared discuss as a State measure since Haldane suddenly dropped it like a hot potato upon the floor of an astonished House. But the official mind is mistaken. There is no military bias whatsoever in General Baden Powell's system and soldiers are glad that it is so.

Cadet Corps do have a military bias and are chiefly valuable as a process for giving cohesion in a fresh form to public schoolboys who have already

trained themselves in sports, observation and character; they are not much use, except as aids to smartness and cleanliness, to boys brought up in State schools who have no chance of any character training beyond what they have picked up in the streets. *Per contra* scout training would not be much use to public schoolboys, but is a heaven-sent method of putting snap into those primary and secondary mortuaries.

So much for the "application" of discipline, training and patriotism to the raw material of an Army. Should it, be decreed by fate that my words awaken some echoes in the hearts of "Labour" and "Democracy," they will insist on their children being given the same chance as the upper classes who have had the luck to form their characters upon an open-air regimen of fair-play, self-discipline, initiative, and responsibility.

The Dominions, as well as the Commonwealth, are miles ahead of us. In Australia, New Zealand and Natal the reform has gone far enough to be pronounced to be the greatest reform. But it is not too late to take a step which will put off the day when Macaulay's New Zealander makes copy out of our ruins. Overseas they are working on cadet lines where behaviour is imposed from outside: we can go one better by frankly adopting the scout method whereby the behaviour is only the outward sign of the inward and spiritual grace. Without one iota of militarism in their education, they will yet, each of them, become twenty-five per cent. more valuable to an Army.

Our new model Army will need new model men. Let us organise, discipline and train them, whether



it be to form an Army of industry or an Army in the field. Let us send our State schools yearly into camp. There, by the sea or on the grassy downs or purple heather, starved soul and stunted physique would be able to shake off for a short time the drag of the stuffy class-room in the mean street. There, they might gain respite from the suffocating atmosphere of the utilitarian-intelligent—that specific for narrowing down human nature into one hard, small point. There, working as a team, victory would be organised and a spirit too, which would make better uses of victory than their parents were able to achieve.

Turn them into little soldiers? Not a bit of it! The boys are soldiers in their hearts already—and where is the harm? Soldiers are not pugnacious. Paul bade Timothy be a good soldier. Christ commended the centurion. Milton urged teachers to fit their pupils for all the offices of war. The very thought of danger and self-sacrifice are inspirations.

When a lover swims to his love across the stormy Hellespont: when an Admiral sinks with his ship after ordering all hands to the boats: when a man prays God that his life may be accepted in exchange for that of his wife or his child, the gallery of fellow mortals take courage, and even as they view the victory of the incorruptible over the corruptible feel immortality stir within their souls.

The spirit of the true Army should be cast in a like mould—winged with a like inspiration. There are religious beliefs too sacred to be freely discussed between brothers, so in the heart of an Army that is to be invincible lies buried like the mainspring

of a watch the password, *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*.

Dare we then refuse to draw the close curtains from the darkened boyhood of our State scholars; shall we continue to deny them even one or two glimpses into the vast realms of united, brotherly struggle, stirring adventure, and progress, in company, towards some dimly discerned but surely glorious goal?

•The measure of beauty the boys absorb in their youth becomes the multiple of their patriotism. Let the State look after the recruits, the Army will look after itself. What an Army we should then possess! Not a dead thing, but a thing of life, animated by a thought of glory. Let the State give her slum children a sight of the rolling seas, of the stars of night. Force her, you voters, to teach her poorest children love of their own woods and rivers and hills. Force her to show them at the same time their national patrimony and how to defend it. Do this—and do it in the name of God—quickly!





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## THE SOUL AND BODY OF AN ARMY.

By GENERAL SIR IAN HAMILTON, G.C.B.

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principal topics are dealt with in all their aspects, and with a profuse wealth of illustration, drawn both from history and from the author's own varied and extensive experience of military administration, and of modern armies in war and in peace time. From this discussion there emerges a body of principles, which in the concluding chapters he applies to the solution of the problems indicated in the preceding pages.

One of the most striking conclusions arrived at is that the rifle has had a levelling effect in war, and has reduced the value of efficiency (training) as against that of numbers. In the late war this tendency was further accentuated by the conditions of trench-warfare; but this will not hold good in the future, when the tactical possibilities of tanks, aeroplanes, etc., have been more completely developed, and success will fall, not to the big battalions, but to the army whose organization and training are best suited to the new conditions.

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Part of this hope found fulfilment in his "Life of Keats," published a few years ago; and the present volume is the result of a purpose he has long entertained of giving us, to use his own words, "a record of the most lively impressions I could definitely recall as having been made upon me since boyhood, not only by persons, but by scenes and places, and not only by these, but by events and movements, especially those in literature and art."

It was originally intended that the work should occupy several volumes, but the effects of the war, and the claims of advancing years have unfortunately prevented the author from carrying out his plan on so ambitious a scale. It is, however, some consolation to reflect that this one volume may perhaps be regarded as containing the concentrated essence of the whole scheme. Its exceptional interest may be gauged from mention of the headings of some of the chapters. These include among others: Mr. Gladstone; Ruskin; Burne-Jones; Rossetti; Robert Browning; East Suffolk as the home of Edward Fitzgerald; George Meredith and Box Hill; The British Museum and Sir Charles Newton; Victor Hugo; and Gambetta. Among places having chapters to themselves are Athens, and the Land's End of France. But the widest appeal will probably be made by the long section of the book dealing with Robert Louis Stevenson, whose intimate friendship with the author may well make the picture here drawn of him come nearer to the life than that which anyone else has given us.

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It may be of interest to add that Mr. Farrer, fascinated by his experiences among Chinese people and Chinese flora, started last year on another adventurous journey into Southern China, but unhappily succumbed to illness in Upper Burmah in December, 1920.

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